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BATTLERIDGE:

AN

*HISTORICAL TALE.*

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VOL. I.

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DGE

HISTORICAL TABLE

VOL. I

BATTLE RIDGE:

AN

HISTORICAL TALE,

FOUNDED ON FACTS.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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BY A LADY OF QUALITY.

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VOL. I.

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LONDON:

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1799.

BATTLE OF BUNDS

BY J. G. ...

LONDON: ...



BY ...  
VOL. I

LONDON

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1853

## PREFACE.

THE principal character in this novel is Doctor Scot, a divine of great eminence; and supposed to have been a favourite chaplain of King Charles the First. An extraordinary occurrence herein represented as having taken place in Batteridge Castle, is related in old editions of Doctor Scot's Christian Life. That excellent author wrote about the time of King William, and may be supposed to have been a descendant of the first mentioned Doctor Scot.

The same wonderful story is related by Moreton on Apparitions. The manners of the age are endeavoured to be delineated; particularly those of the Puritans; now almost as obsolete (Hudibras being seldom read) as the traits of character which, doubtless, distinguished the Lollards in the reigns of Henry the Fourth and Fifth.

At the suggestion of some friends the author of these sheets has been unwillingly prevailed upon, by way of enlarging the book, to add an early Scottish story founded on fact. Assuredly, in works of this important nature, the *great whole* should not be intruded on even by episode. Longer descriptions of, and more

dialogue respecting, the *belle passion* has been recommended.

Richardson, Goldsmith, and Miss Burney (with some ingenious imitators of *their* works) can alone dwell upon the delicacies of Love without nauseating the reader; and without that immoral tendency too prevalent in some late brilliant novelists, whose frail ladies, even *married* ladies, are represented as angels; and our young female Novices are taught to abjure parental duty, eloping with their admirers upon *principle*, and in the most *sentimental* style.

Mrs. Radcliffe alone, through her luxuriant *imagination*, and extended *information*, can deal in the descriptive, and paint the scenes of

magnificent and wild nature with her pen. She is Queen of the *tremendous*; and alas! is most copiously, most inadequately imitated by almost every writer since her *Romance of the Forest* appeared.

The author, therefore, of **BATTLE-RIDGE** ventures not upon much *Love*, and dares not attempt florid scenery; and if events occur, rather uncommon, an appearance of simple plain truth is all herein endeavoured to be represented.



# BATTLE RIDGE.

## CHAP. I.

TOWARDS the close of Oliver Cromwell's usurpation, (that great wicked man, as our noble historian so justly stiles him) a respectable looking person, mounted on a stout horse, resembling in form, though not clad in canonicals, Thomson's little fat oily man, approached Battleridge Castle, the noble mansion of the ancient house of Vesey. Having cleared away the perplexity of brambles which impeded

the passage of the draw-bridge, our friend assailed the impervious and massy portal: he knocked, and knocked, and knocked again—no admittance. Being of a temper not remarkable for patience, he quitted his horse, and peeping through an aperture of the door, burst out into the following soliloquy: ‘Then, by heaven, all is true! and this noble family is gone abroad. This time twenty years, when my clerkship ended with Lawyer Colson, never shall I forget it, I came to bid adieu to my old playmate, Sir Ralph Vesey: how kindly did he part with poor Jack Jephson, as he called me! “Ah!” says he, “no more cricket, no more base-ball, they are sending me to Geneva.” What a change! the grass now grows, as it were, where

Troy town once stood! not a creature stirring in this brave tilt-yard, once filled with liveried servants, gallant steeds, and groups of poor souls made glad by daily relief. A light dances in the matted gallery; it grows dusky; and they always kindle lights here first.'

Again the lawyer knocked; his ear recognized the slow, heavy, and dragging noise of a slip-shoed approacher. The bar gave way, but not the chain; an old grey-headed face peeping out, asked, 'What do you want?' 'Ah,' replied the stranger, 'by my faith, old Marmaduke, the game-keeper. Do you not remember Jack Jephson?' 'Not I.'—'Not the young lawyer of Kendal?' 'Lawyer!' replied Marmaduke 'his Honour has had enough of lawyers!'—and slapping the gate close,

re traced his slow pace towards the Castle.

‘I will not be discouraged,’ said Jack; ‘yes, yes, I do believe poor Sir Ralph knows enough of our fraternity!’ Knock, knock, knock, again and again; at length the dancing light of a farthing candle was joyfully beheld, and another peeper appeared at the gate. ‘Sir, is your name really Jephson?’ said the messenger. ‘Indeed it is, and if I mistake not, you are Mr. Worldridge, the butler, though grown thin and pale.’ ‘Aye, Sir, sorrow subdues us all: I hope, by your jolly looks, you know nothing of it. I recollect you well, you were always a very sober, civil young gentleman, and a mighty favourite of poor Sir Ralph’s.’ ‘Is he here? is he well? I hear he has a son. How does my Lady and Miss,

whose beauty is talked of far and near? Will he see me? As I wish for salvation, I come in hopes of serving him, not as one of those cursed lawyers who, I hear, betrayed him.'

The door opened. 'Let us,' said the butler, 'put up your horse; there is some hay—I fear, no corn. Ah! Mr. Jephson, all is up with us! we should have been off long since, but my dear Lady is too ill to be removed. Sir Ralph, I am sure, will see you; his only support is his fine little boy. Lord Aumerl's people have taken possession, and are in the house; none of us are left but my Lady's maid, a kitchen wench, old Marmaduke, and myself.'

They approached the Castle, and entering the steward's parlour, Worlidge raked up the wood embers, and

placing the remnant of a candle on the table, retired.

‘What shall I, shall I do? I cannot bear to see Sir Ralph; I shall not behave like a man,’ said the lawyer.

The door opened; a pretty child of four years old peeped in, and crying, ‘Papa, papa, here is the gentleman!’ led in Sir Ralph; a fine benign looking person, not more than forty; sorrow had added deep traits to his manly beauty, but the smile of real benevolence still irradiated his pleasing countenance. ‘My old friend, Jack Jephson! what a cordial!’

Not a word could the lawyer reply; but running his forehead hard against the brown wainscot, blubbered like a school-boy. ‘Give vent, my dear old friend, to this kind woe; do not hurry yourself. I am grown callous,

methinks. All, my dear Jack, is not gone; my wife has a snug farm on the Lake of Geneva—but, ah! I fear she is going to a better station, and I must lose her; every other evil is trifling.' Then, not till then, Sir Ralph wept. 'Don't cry, papa,' said the child, 'mamma has just eat some chick, and I had a leg.' 'God in heaven bless thee, thou sweet soul!' cried the lawyer, catching up the boy, and smothering him with kisses. 'Pardon my freedom, Sir, but I do love you all, that I do.'

Sir Ralph, drying his eyes, again kindly greeted the lawyer. 'Let us have another candle,' said he, 'put on some dry wood, and order something for supper; for I have, my friend, a well aired bed to offer you, and believe me, your company is a real relief.' The lawyer made his best bow. 'Troth,

Sir, I came here not impertinently; I heard, sorrowfully enough, that for want of a deed your uncle, Lord Aumerl, had made an entry on your premises:—the devil take all such old Puritans! So, Sir, I just called, to tell you I have a vouchment that such a deed did exist: a poor bit of service, I fear.’ ‘Thank you heartily; I will just see how my poor wife does, and after we have supped, and she is gone to rest, you shall hear the sad predicament I am in; but it is not pecuniary trouble, it is family afflictions that unman me.’

The supper being removed, Sir Ralph began. ‘You know, my grandfather, old Lord Aumerl, had two sons; my father was the youngest, the present Lord the eldest: he being extravagant, debauched, and inclined, thro



interest, to the rising party of Puritans; my loyal grandfather being offended, divided this great estate between his two sons, by deed of gift, giving this castle and large demesnes to my father. My father died suddenly, when I was very young, leaving no memorial where the deed was deposited. Mr. Aisleby, my guardian, (no friend to kingly government) sent me for education to Geneva. My religious and political tenets were not perverted thereby; and to that delightful abode I owe every happiness I have since enjoyed; for there the tenderest of unions was formed: Lady Vesey is the daughter and little heiress of a worthy citizen of Lucerne. We had not long enjoyed every blessing Providence could bestow in this delightful retreat,

before the late civil feuds broke out. My injured Sovereign called personal aid from every loyal and honest man. My dear wife, like an ancient Roman matron, with weeping eyes, armed her husband for his military duty, and pressing our dear little girl to her breast, cried, "Thou shalt be now my comforter; Providence will protect thy father, and prosper so just a cause." I joined my King at Edge-hill with a considerable force, and never was absent in any succeeding engagement, receiving my valued knighthood from his sacred hand at Marston-moor. When the fatal catastrophe was closed by his martyrdom, I returned hither, and have here remained unmolested by Covenanters, Puritans, and Independants. This merciful neglect, as-

surely, is owing to my relation, the good Lord of Southampton, who, tho' the steadiest, is the most lenient of the Reformers, and ever has had great weight with the Protector. The credit of this forbearance my uncle Aumerl arrogates to his great influence with the powers that be. He is, in truth, one of Oliver's nearest friends, is become a fifth monarchy-man, and, being able to pray with the most pious, contrives to lard his sanctity with a mixture of that buffoonery the Protector himself displays in his private coteries, and which he greatly admires in others. Heaven pardon me, if I falsely think this Lord bears me a rancorous hatred!

• Having been at great expence, through my military attendance upon,

and willing loans to his late and present Majesty, selling a small part of my estate became inevitable. I had, alas! recourse to old Williamson the lawyer, ever our professional man, and who owed all that he has to my father. In the course of the negociation, I was obliged to tell him in confidence, that the deed of gift, given to my father of these estates, was not to be found. This man doubtless betrayed my confidence to Lord Aumerl, he being great, powerful, and rich, whilst his old client and friend was evidently in his declination.

About two years since, the consequence was shewn in the following letter from my Lord:

“ RIGHT WORTHY AND ESTEEMED NEPHEW,

“ Your father, Heaven rest his soul !  
I ween, like another Jacob, has de-  
prived me of my birth-right, forging  
a tale of my late honoured parents  
having, by deed of gift, given him the  
Battlebridge estates, the far better share  
of his vineyard. If such a deed be  
produced, or if by evidence I could be  
assured it ever did exist, I would not  
further distress my kinsman. The  
Lord forbid I should prove another  
Ahab, or wish to remove my neigh-  
bour's landmark ! Unworthy then  
would he prove who longs to see the  
New Jerusalem, and hopes shortly,  
amid our many living Saints, to follow  
our holy Leader and great Protector  
into this his appointed monarchy.  
Commend me to your Lady, my niece,

and to your daughter and infant son. May Jehovah be your guard, and remove the film from off your's and the eyes of all appertaining to the Whore of Babylon! and so I rest, with the right hand of friendship,

“Your loving kinsman,

“And assured friend,

“AUMERL.”

The honest Jephson was so agitated that mild Sir Ralph could not proceed. He took from his saddle-bags a small parcel, muttering to himself all the time, and brandishing the papers—  
 “Yes, yes, Sir Ralph! here is damning proof against him, that such a deed was legally made, and did exist: but, alack-a-day! that is no proof in law; and as to the old Puritan's honour, and the holy flim-flam he boasts

of, a fig for both. I know him too well, and all his canting brethren, to believe he will resign a souse, if not compelled by law or ocular proof.' 'Indeed,' replied Sir Ralph, 'I think more favourably of him. Pray, my friend, relate the circumstances of your getting this evidence; but do not flatter me: all sanguinity is over; and yet (beside this your kind acquisition) this letter of to-day dawns with further hope.' 'Shew it to me this moment,' said the impetuous lawyer. 'For Heaven's sake, Sir, forgive me! I grow every day more and more impatient, and so warm, that at club they call me Pepper Jack.' 'Your's, my friend, is the true warmth; it is the glow of friendship. But let us proceed methodically: I will finish my sad tale; you shall descant upon your paper; and I

will then display this extraordinary letter.

In return to Lord Aumerl's letter, my reply was, "That such a deed did exist; but where I could not discover." Within a few weeks my Lord put in his claim: my known right and high spirit led me to try my suit in every court of law: I was cast in all; some said, through the malevolence of party and secret influence; but I do not credit that assertion. These new and copious expences completed my embarrassments, and reduced me to dispose of all my valuables, and part with my servants.

My Lord sent a proper person to take possession of every thing, at the same time desiring me very kindly not to hasten my departure. My wife's cheerful acquiescence in every misfor-



tune taught me philosophy; and thankful were we to Providence that she possessed a little asylum in Switzerland, which would furnish the necessaries, the comforts of humble life; and thither were we preparing to go, when still heavier afflictions were suffered, doubtless for wise ends, to assail us.

‘ Lord Aumerl has two sons: the eldest is an idiot; rendered so, reports say, by his father’s cruelties; for he never would embrace his Lordship’s religious or political principles, and therefore is confined at Aumerl, where the family reside. Its vicinity to this castle frequently brought the second brother, Obadiah Vesey, to visit its purlieus. Meeting him by chance one day, civility led me to ask if he chose to see an habitation shortly to be his residence ?

Obadiah is in mind and person the very quintessence of the times, and therefore is idolized by my Lord, tho' abhorred by all who have the misfortune to belong to him. Alas! in passing through a gallery he saw my beauteous daughter. Though not attuned to mirth, or inclined to think unfavourably of any one, her beauties were heightened by smiles—smiles at his long, lank, cropt, puritanic appearance, and that odious scriptural cant which marks our present Saints. My Nora's charms acted too powerfully upon the tough heart of Obadiah. He quitted us suddenly, embarrassed and awkward to a degree beyond description.

We suppose the request of Obadiah to his father, relative to *suiting* (as he termed it) my daughter, was rejected,

for within a few days he was dragged out of a pond, and the distracted father long thought his darling past recovery. Short was the interval before I received from my Lord the proposal of an union between our children. The thought was repugnant to us all. My Nora had not a heart to give; and if she had, I never could have wished her to bestow it on such a person. The refusal was civil. A second letter announced that, by her compliance, her father should enjoy Battleridge for life; and a considerable reversion was promised to her little brother. My wife and I were not so mean as to fabricate even a wish to sacrifice thus our Iphigenia. Oh! how the dear generous girl's words still vibrate on my mind! "My dearest parents," said she, "I am under no engagement.

Mine is a forlorn hope: you are every thing to me: I will endeavour to overcome disinclination, and knowing my duty, try to render it paramount both to the deserving and the undeserving; I will see Mr. Vesey, and endeavour not to dislike him."

I will not trouble you with the honest dissuasives we used. In every interview with Obadiah, poor Nora's aversion peeped out from behind the veil of her filial wishes to render us happy. The appointed day, on her part, was twice postponed, and again fixed at some weeks' distance. Oh! how miserable we all were! how did we urge her to send a final denial, and immediately go with us into Switzerland! We urged in vain. A fortnight before the intended marriage, she entered our room, flushed and dis-

composed, saying, Mr. Vesey had behaved improperly: but she was herself again, and would overcome self. Next evening (fatal and accursed be it!) she went, as usual, to walk by the river in the park, and never, never since have we seen her!

Sir Ralph stopped: the big rolling tears relieved him; while the affectionate Jephson again betook himself to violence and execration.

‘I cannot,’ resumed Sir Ralph, ‘dwell upon the horrors we endured. It was the general opinion she had sought a watry death: but my wife and I knew too well her high-souled principles, and that they were accompanied with that true fortitude and humility which would prevent her presumptuous appearance before the Almighty uncalled for. Poor Mr. Vesey’s distraction added to our sorrow.

My Lord's behaviour was tender and kind:

‘ In this dreadful state of suspense we remained several days; when a billet was found, thrown down a chimney, written by Nora. “ I am trying to secrete myself from—you know who. I am well: time may restore me to my dearest parents; but they never can discover where I am. At Geneva I may one day join them.”

‘ Miserable comfort this! yet it was comfort. Six melancholy weeks are passed since we received this sad letter; they were spent in irresolution as to our future destination. My wife's amazing fortitude kept me from despondency; but doubtless I required still further in the most severe of all ills. Last Saturday evening Lady Vesey was found on the floor, in the

Picture gallery, in fits; and though now happily recovered, and very calm, she sometimes talks wildly to her maid (never to me) of visions, averring her head is deranged. No wonder! But I see not marks of insanity; I see nothing but extreme weakness, and greatly fear symptoms of quick decay. Think you, my friend, any one can be more variously miserable? Yet, thank Heaven! I acquiesce.'

'Sir, Sir!' said the poor lawyer, 'I can stand it no longer. I shall but make bad worse: I beg leave to retire. To-morrow my manners may be mended. Continue to trust, Sir Ralph, in the Almighty. Remember your boy!' So saying, he caught up the candle, ran out of the room, and the two friends parted for the night.

CHAP. II.

**VIOLENT** in every passion, the good Jephson poured copious libations on the altar of grief, and getting some refreshing sleep towards morning, awoke a renovated man, priming himself with resolutions to be calm, gentle, silent, and, if possible, not to swear at a single Puritan. Lady Vesey having passed a calm night, Sir Ralph tried to be chearful. Breakfast removed, and the prattling boy sent to his mamma, the gentlemen drew near the fire. Jephson, rubbing his hands, stroking his fat face, and thrusting his wig back, cried, ' Now, Sir Ralph!



now for you letter ; for I cannot read a word of my paper till I have seen that.' ' You are not methodical, Jack ; but for once I will humour you. It is from my friend Hazzlerig, (' curse him !' says Jephson ; ' I beg pardon, Sir Ralph') who, though not one of us, and still a member of the Rump, is an excellent good man. I am sure we now subsist upon his bounty.

SIR THO. HAZZLERIG TO SIR RALPH VESEY.

" ASSURED FRIEND, *From London, March 3, 1758.*

" I HAD (praise God !) a safe journey to this great and wicked Nineveh. Two days after I got here, my friend Talmash, the great Turkey merchant, desired me to dine with him, and be early, for he had business. Though of your cursed party, Talmash is an honest good fellow ; and in monies,

useful to and well esteemed by his Highness the Protector: so I went. Talmash told me a long story, as I thought, of a cock and a bull, till your name roused my attention. A Doctor Scot, as he called him, one of your now deprived and starving parsons, wanted to meet me, and talk over your affairs. 'And the Devil! (said I) what good will that do? Poor Ralph is poor enough already, and can't take in begging Levites.' 'Be serious, Sir Thomas,' said Talmash, 'you like to do good actions, and I verily believe the upright man now coming has your friend's service much at heart: he is a Non-conformist, and thereby (with a wife and large family to support) gave up great preferment: he lives in Kentish Town, near my house; and among us, we keep him from starving: he is

an Israelite indeed. Your friend Milton employs him as a copyist; and, I can tell you, a more universal scholar never existed; yet so humble, so truly what a Christian ought to be!

“He sought me out last night at our coffee-house, earnest in interrogations if I knew of such a person as Sir Ralph Vesey, and what I knew of his affairs? My reply was only from common report, and I referred him to you for particulars. In my life I never saw man so seemingly agitated, though in general perfectly calm and mild on the most trying occasions. My mind is on stilts till he comes and solves our doubts, for he is no man of mystery, but the most prudently unreserved companion I ever met with. ‘All grimace,’ said I; ‘he, I’ll warrant, is concerned in cheating my poor friend: un-

der the mask of joviality and carelessness, you Cavaliers can do much business of that kind.' 'Would to Heaven,' said Talmash, 'the King's restoration depended solely on Dr. Scot's rectitude in this and all other affairs!—Here he comes.'

“ A striking figure he was ; though pale, emaciated, and clad in rusty yet clean canonicals. Such an eye ! so piercing, yet so benign ! truly I be-  
thought me of things past, and was glad I was under age when poor Charles Stuart lost his head. The Doctor had in his address that perfect respect, void of servility, which too often preface the best of our elect. I told him every particular of your melancholy state : indeed he was strangely affected ; and when I assured him (in answer to his earnest demand) that a long picture-

gallery ornamented, Battleridge, and that within it was a room full of lumber, he replied, 'Gracious Heaven, I thank thee! then, indeed, I may save this poor gentleman from ruin! Let me beg your Honours not to esteem me insane; I am, I think, perfectly myself, and no enthusiast. I cannot at present tell you (I wish it was permitted) by whose command I act, and will (Heaven willing) set forward on Monday, with staff in hand, to wait upon Sir Ralph Vesey. By that time Mr. Milton will pay me earnings sufficient for my journey. I know you, my good and charitable Mr. Talnash, will not let my wife and little ones know distress; and of you, Sir Thomas Hazzlerig, I will beg particular directions of the road.'

'While I possess (was my reply, and

strangely moved we both were) two stout geldings, and an old groom who knows the country, such a man as Doctor Scot shall not travel like a pauper.' Nor shall so good a cause pursued, or so good a wife left behind, want money,' says Talmash, putting a purse in the much-affected man's hand.

(I accept, gentlemen, your offered favours with gratitude inexpressible; the Almighty will repay you. I will not, Sir Thomas, trespass on your bounty, by any neglect or ill usage of your horses; and depend on my earliest return. My motive assuredly is good, may the event justify my action! if not, good gentlemen, have candour sufficient to allow for human weakness; but do not think me, at all events, insane.' The Doctor accordingly sets forward to-morrow; disused to travel-

ling, he will proceed slowly. I will not flatter you a whit, but Talmash thinks with me, that this good man will develop your important deed. Amen. Be open and unreserved in your communication towards him, as to

“Your assured friend

“And servant,

“J. HAZZLERIG.”

The lawyer's joy was altogether as ungovernable as his sorrow had been; the sanguinity he meant to express could be ill understood from the rapid sputtering attendant on his rhetoric. ‘Yes, yes, the day's our own, down with the Rump! (our first health at club). This Doctor will bring the deed; here is its legal witnesses lawfully shewn’—again brandishing the

papers. ' Now, Sir Ralph, to business indeed! and all concerning it you shall hear.'

' We have in our town a club; it is on Thursdays, our market-day; and an honester club Britain cannot shew. About a month-since, one of us, just come from London, was telling all about your ill-luck; it so hurt me that I shook out my half-smoaked pipe and left them. You must know the informant was our Parson, and a good one he is, and always attends club, cost free. I remember he said he was going forthwith to Askrig, and on his return told me that a very old man, of the name of Lindsey, once your grandfather's under-butler, lived in the alms-house there; that he witnessed the very deed lost; and being as shrewed as ever, told many particulars. Dad, Sir, I took my horse forth-



with, and went to Askrig. Lindsey was as clear as the day, as you will see in the paper, in his evidence: said that the old Lord, your grandfather, in this very steward's parlour, attended by the chaplain, Mr. Howe, long since dead, the Honourable Mr. Caresby, now Lord Bellfont of the kingdom of Ireland, and a lawyer, were reading and signing a paper as he went in and out of the room, laying the cloth for supper. Those gentlemen witnessed it. The lawyer then said, there must be a third. My Lord bid Richards, the butler, lend his hand. He said, "My Lord, I have a whitlow on my thumb, and cannot write, but here is Ned Lindsey writes well." "Ah," said my Lord, "you are always so proud of having taught that lad: come, Ned." The lawyer wanted a more

creditable witness. "No, no," said my Lord, "Ned is after the other two, and I am in confounded haste for my supper." Ned witnessed the parchment.

My Lord then said, "Gentlemen, I thank you; pray observe, and do you, Ned, observe too, I deliver this deed as my own free gift of this Battleridge estate in favour of my second son, Matthew Vesey, as a reward for his duty to me; hereby excluding my eldest son, John, who always has been the torment of my life."

Lindsey told me a world more about it. I got this, his evidence, lawfully set out, for fear of accidents; and having given the old Trojan a good fee, hastened home. My wife's brother is a Counsellor in Dublin. I wrote to him to enquire if Lord Bellfont was

living; and hearing he was, my brother-in-law kindly waited upon his Lordship with a letter from me; and see here his Lordship's answer, and how exactly his evidence, perpetuated also, tallies with Ned Lindsey's.

So, hereupon I came to shew you, honoured Sir, these particulars; God's hand is with us, and I know as well as a prophet we shall find the deed; so, with your leave, I shall tarry here this day, longing hugely to see this blessed Doctor to-morrow. I must be out by peep of day, or plump Peg will be uneasy. Ah! Sir, you remember her the prettiest black-eyed lass in all Dovedale, and now she is the handsomest piece of large goods in the North. By marrying her, I offended all my relations, but it was the best day's work I ever

did: being poor, we had nothing to trust to but my desk and her notability; by which means we were early accustomed to industry and frugality, and never shall be other than plain living, though now plentiful people; and I will tell you how it comes to pass. Peggy's mother's brother, an old tradesman at Liverpool, on the appearance of the civil wars, shut up shop, and lived, or rather starved in a garret, and Peggy heard that he would have been quite famished but for some good gentle-folks. She therefore took our little cart, went to Liverpool, and fetched the old gentleman, with his coffer full of rags, to live with us, and so he did for sixteen years. A quiet good creature he was, and mighty useful in rocking the cradles, for we commonly

had two going, and I always got most money at those times.

‘After he had been with us a twelve-month, “Nephew,” says he, “you are a lawyer, and I have a small matter in my coffer to give; tie it as fast as you can to yourselves, and I will sign the parchment: pray ask me for nothing while I live, for it distracts me to impart.”

My wife said that he every day opened his coffer, being locked in; and when he grew blind, she constantly led him to it, and he would feel if all was safe.

‘Poor man! he was high in his principles, and loved minced-pye too well, which we did contrive to get at Christmas, though forbid as prophane and papistical by the Puritans; eating too much of this forbidden food, he died suddenly after it. And, would you

believe it, wrapt up in rags, we found much money, with Exchequer tallies, to the tune of three thousand pounds. I vow and swear, had any neighbour offered me twenty pounds for my chance, I should gladly have taken it. Soon afterwards, an old gentlewoman, for whom I had got a good estate, being my client, left me sole executor, and by her I got near as much as by my uncle.

“Sir, I am no cracking man, I only tell you this, to make you willing to take of me one thousand pounds, for money will be wanting in recovering your rights; and I come to tell you it is ready at a week’s notice. Not a scrap of acknowledgment will I take: if you become rich, I am sure of payment; if not, as Peggy says, we shall be paid in a better place.”

Here ceased the many-worded man; the acknowledgments of the good Knight were prefaced with such sensibility, that the lawyer blubbered audibly. He arose, and giving himself an universal shake, catching the Knight's hand, cried, 'No more of this, my man; I will even go into the fresh air, and seek out some of our old haunts, and try at putting up an old acquaintance.'

Away he went, and did not return till late in the day. 'Is the Doctor come, Marmaduke?' 'No, no body's come, as I know of.' Mr. Jephson was so impatient for the expected guest's arrival, that he watched at the window in vain, till day-light was gone; and having by this means bottled up many words, an inundation of talk burst forth thus to Sir Ralph after supper. 'Well, your Honour, I must tell, tho'

may hap I may not be thanked, I have had a little bout with Obadiah.' 'Dear Jephson,' replied the Knight, I grieve at it, knowing your great zeal for me; I hope you were civil; poor Mr. Vesey is nearly as much to be pitied on Nora's account as we are.' 'Why, aye,' replied Jephson, 'I do think him half distracted about her, yet it has not abated his cunning; but you shall hear all.

'Having brevited round the grounds some hours, I saw not far off, a tall, lean, lank, puritanic figure on horseback, attended by a lad in the Aumerl livery: dad, I knew him directly. "Servant, Sir," says I, "a fine day. What, you are viewing that fine old castle; pray to whom may it belong? for I am a far country-man. After much cant of the times, and great formal civility, he re-



plied, "Sir Ralph Vesey now tenants it, but it is my father, the Lord Aumerl's inheritance, and I forthwith am to enter and sojourn there." "Pray, Sir," said I, "has not that gentleman lately had a sad mishap with a daughter?" In troth I was sorry I asked, the poor toad seemed in such agonies, calling her the apple of his eye, his rose of Sharon, his balm of Gilead, and running through half the canticles in her praise. "Well, Squire Vesey," said I, "I am sorry I named Miss; hope her poor parents and you will recover her. I heard lately a lawyer of our town tell all about this Sir Ralph's affairs, and he said, the deed lost (by many thought never to be made at all) was authenticated, as to having existed, by the evidence of two living witnesses; and I

saw the proofs out of his pocket: he also said, that Lord Aumerl, like a good pious soul, as they say he is, has promised, under his own hand, to give up his claim, on assurance that such a gift was made by his father." Obadiah turned pale through wrath, and being off his guard, replied: "If my father is such a cursed fool, that am not I; every penny we have shall go to fix us there," pointing to your house; and then he fell a canting, talking of the abomination of Jacob, in cheating Esau of his birth-right and of his blessing. I laughed; that put Mr. Obadiah in a very great rage, and he used such abuse to me that I fell in a passion likewise, yet, knowing the law, did not go beyond my tether; but I did wish him to strike me, that I might have a

little bit of an action against him. After long swearing at each other, I do remember clenching my fist, and saying, "Thou offset of Calvin, those dear pigsnies shall soon, very soon indeed, behold, with the witnesses confirmation, the real and identical deed itself, to thy eternal confusion." He became again pale, his teeth chattered with rage. "Bid him, (you, I suppose, he meant) bid him beware, vengeance I can and will take, which will render him completely mad." Thus saying, he rode off, and I returned here, meditating on what vengeance the law could allow, and none can it, I am sure.

Poor Sir Ralph was more dejected than agitated. 'Ah, my friend,' says he, 'with the best of hearts, I greatly

fear you have weakened the best of causes; this comes through your over-eagerness; surely never was less ground for hope; all is uncertain at best; and most probably this Doctor Scot is some poor visionary, deranged by the distraction of the times. God's will be done in all; may the threatened vengeance be averted, my wife, my boy, not involved in it, and may my poor girl, if living, be preserved from falling into Mr. Vesey's hands! How very happy, even in this hour of wretchedness, do I feel, that she was not his wife.'

The evening passed in chat. The lawyer said, please Heaven, he would be there again that day se'enight, and bring the thousand pounds; was sure the deed would be forthcoming; and

charged Sir Ralph not to say a word of it, or let it go out of his hands till he came again. Sir Ralph, half smiling, replied: 'I believe, my dear friend, that is a promise I may safely make.'

CHAP. III.

**E**ARLY next morning the honest impetuous lawyer left the Castle, and within two hours after Sir Thomas Hazzlerig's groom announced Doctor Scot's having arrived at a neighbouring village the last evening, and would not proceed lest he should hurry the family, desiring leave to wait upon Sir Ralph. 'This,' says Sir Ralph to himself, 'shews calmness and kind consideration; but poor Jephson shall never make me the silly dupe of fallacious hope: my wife shall not know a word of this affair.'

Sir Ralph met the Doctor at the outer gate: each sought the other's

hand: both were much affected, and totally silent. Such are often the effects of unaccountable sympathy; the souls of these good men were congenial, and their hearts oppressed by that strange something within which forbade speech. They entered the house.

‘How much obliged am I—‘ Stop, Sir Ralph,’ said the Doctor, ‘in this case, the event must determine all; and be assured, let it be as it may, it is for the best. All I intreat is, that if my search after this important paper proves futile, I may not be deemed insane; be so kind as to favour me with the recital of your family affairs, I mean as far as prudence can justify to a stranger.’ Sir Ralph was very explicit, save on the melancholy state of Lady Vesey, and on the loss of his daughter, subjects which such sensi-

bility as his must slightly pass over, if he meant to retain that calmness and fortitude he wished to possess. 'Think not,' said the Doctor in reply, 'think not strangely of me, if I appear authoritative, and yet cannot name my authority. Although you say that even to unwainscoting and unflooring rooms, every search has been ineffectually made, I must entreat leave to re-search a lumber room, which, I am informed, you have within a picture gallery.' 'There, Sir,' replied Sir Ralph, 'our search has been repeatedly made, and alas! in vain—but I obey.'

The Knight and the Doctor, silent, and secretly agitated, ascended the vast oaken stair-case to the uppermost range of rooms; passing with melancholy steps through desolated apartments, bearing the distressful marks



of the past ineffectual searches. Upon entering the gallery, 'You will not expose me, Sir, if I do not succeed?' said the tremulous Doctor.—'Have the goodness to bring implements proper for forcing boxes, that servants may not be called—perhaps, to witness my folly.'

While Sir Ralph went to furnish the tools required, the Doctor remained locked up in the gallery, amidst the representations of a long, long series of the Vesey family. The good prisoner was found by Sir Ralph sitting in an arm-chair, his face pale as death, his hands surcharged with cold and clammy dew. 'A little wine, if you please, Sir Ralph; my journey has fatigued me.' The viand was instantly procured by the much wondering Knight. The Doctor reviving, impa-

tiently said, 'Whose is that venerable portrait I now front?' 'It is that of my grandfather and designed benefactor, Lord Aumerl.' Joy irradiated Doctor Scot's face; his nerves seemed to receive fresh vigour. 'Worthy Sir,' said he, 'proceed to the inner apartment: I am become a new man: we shall be successful.'

The massy door and cumbrous lock, grown admissible with ease by late frequency of use, opened. What a scene! The lumber of centuries, even beyond the Conquest! and hardly rendered visible from paucity of light; an article in which our ancestors were ever parsimonious, even in their most elaborate castles. There lay numbers of the cross-bows and targets, which probably had done execution under the early Henries: there, the accoutre-

ments of those sanguinary Knights, who engaged in the divisions of York and Lancaster. Heaps of deeds and parchment engrossed one corner; another glittered dimly with the tarnished paraphernalia that had adorned each successive bride in the Vesey family, and which, according to family custom, were here carefully preserved; but having been lately dislodged from their cedar trunks, were not as yet replaced. The centre of the room was a confused mass of discarded furniture and family letters; the residue exhibited quantities of old trunks and coffer mounted upon each other. Towards that assemblage Doctor Scot directed his quick discerning eye.

‘There lies my game,’ said he—  
‘let us search for a very old small coffer, made of heart of oak and

cramped with iron. There it is! How wonderful! Assist me, Sir Ralph, in bringing it to the window.' 'Most readily,' replied the Knight—'but all in vain, my dear Sir; those coffers have been repeatedly searched.' To the window it was brought. The mathematical Doctor from his case of instruments selected a nicely formed ruler: to work he went, measuring within and without. 'Yes,' said he, 'a false bottom, though shallow, is demonstrable; and, Sir, if I am a true prophet, you will not only find your deed herein, but also a large sum of money.' The hammer and chissel soon sounded; but from the excessive hardness of the wood it proved almost an Herculean labour. 'Try the gimblet—gently, gently, Sir Ralph, lest it should pierce the papers: there, draw it out.

With my finger I feel parchment: let us be careful, and try on the further side.' Sir Ralph worked like a Cyclops; an aperture was made, and out fell a Spanish doubloon.

Enough of the descriptive. After many hours of hard work, the deed was found entire, and with it a very considerable sum of money, with this written note:—" March 3d, A. D. 1622. Old Aumerl here deposits the deed of Battleridge, appertaining solely to his son Matthew. Troublesome times draw near, when the residue may be useful to him and his children, to whom it solely belongs.

Signed, AUMERL."

Doctor Scot, on viewing this note, stepped backwards, seemingly rapt in contemplation and high devotion. Sir Ralph's joy was of a melancholy

cast awhile; when, bursting into tears, he cried, 'My boy, my boy! Great God! I thank thee! With what lively gratitude am I impressed, upon the child's account! Be he a worthy steward! And for you, dear Doctor, what can I say? Words would ill and idly express my feelings!' 'Turn all your thanksgivings, Sir Ralph, to their great primary cause — I am a poor agent; I was impelled to make this trial; and now, thank Heaven that it was so!' 'Your advice how I should proceed, my good Doctor?' 'I am no secularist: certainly, present concealment is necessary, and an application to the ablest lawyers.

The deed and attendant treasure being safely and secretly deposited, Doctor Scot wished to take leave, and return to town. 'Ah, Doctor!' said

Sir Ralph, let not the better genius of a still poor deplorable family flit instantly away! What a cordial would your goodness pour into my wife's wounded mind! which all the treasure of Croesus cannot heal. Send Hazzlerig's horses back, and give his friendly heart the pleasure of knowing how happily your kind endeavours have succeeded. Send to your lady and family a most hearty invitation here: you know our new friends, the doubloons, can now make every thing easy. But do not, do not leave me: you may pacify my wife's disturbed mind; you may teach us both patience and resignation; and in the secular way, as you term it, be of infinite use in joining your advice with a truly worthy and able lawyer, whom I ex-

pect next week here, to display true friendship, true generosity !'

Doctor Scot was not the kind of man who deals in parade, or wished to do offices by halves. 'Yes, Sir,' he replied, 'I will most readily and cheerfully await your commands here; returning my humble thanks for the honour offered to my wife and family: they are under the care of a most kind and liberal friend, and are at present by no means in a suitable situation to appear before your good lady. My wife was only child of the late worthy Bishop of St. Asaph: he taught her well to know how to abound and how to withhold: nor is she less pleasant and contented in adversity than she was humble and munificent in prosperity: I owed to such a wife the com-



munication of my embassy here; and to hear of its success will be a pleasure to her far exceeding my personal appearance. Have the goodness to write yourself to Sir Thomas Hazzlerig every particular of the late event; and might I presume to offer advice, it would be to rely entirely on the counsel of that approved friend; a man, respected by all parties, and in the highest favour with that great man whom Providence has decreed for a season to rule this land.

Sir Ralph's judgment being accordant with the Doctor's, the letters and servant were soon sent towards London. How to enter upon this joyful topic to Lady Vesey, in her present debilitated state, was the next question. "Her health, Doctor," said Sir Ralph, "is assuredly mended; she has no com-

plaint, and for hours converses with me as usual; yet, when urged, says her mind is disturbed, and that I am the very last person to whom she can tell her uneasiness. Alas! I fear she has heard some dismal account of our lost daughter; yet she says to the contrary, and she is truth itself; never will she quit her chamber, she avers, till she quits this house for ever; and very urgent is she to remove into some adjacent cottage, a little longer there to wait, in fond hopes of recovering her child, before we finally remove to Switzerland. Though hitherto a woman of solitude, since her seizure, she is in terrors if left alone. Ah! Doctor, Doctor, assuredly variety of distress has deranged her too sensitive mind! My only hope rests on her seeing you: you perhaps may quiet these strange

'fears.' 'Alas, Sir, my powers of persuasion arise not beyond mediocrity; you may depend upon my poor service, if any can be rendered. Pray hint to her ladyship only a possibility, rather than a probability, that the deed may be discovered, and see how she receives the intelligence.'

CHAP. IV.

SIR RALPH passed directly into Lady Vesey's apartment: she instantly laid aside her Bible, and received him with that sweet smile, through which dejection, her deep dejection, was hardly visible. He told her that Sir Thomas Hazzlerig had sent a worthy Divine to visit them. She expressed joy at Sir Ralph's having such company. Being told his name, 'Doctor Scot!' said she; 'I have often heard of his goodness and sufferings upon that account.' After a pause, 'perhaps he will have the charity to visit me.' 'Assuredly, my dearest; and he will then tell you there

is a possibility of the lost deed being recovered.' 'For your sake, Sir Ralph, and our dear boy's, I should rejoice; but do not flatter yourself—it never, never will appear!' 'Nay, Lady Vesey, say not so: I see it does not hurry you. There is great probability that it actually has been found.

'I am an infidel! Ah, that the most distant gleam of recovering our greatest treasure could illumine my darkened mind—that would be joy indeed! But do let me see this good man: yet stay a little, for I wish to receive him in a composed and respectful manner.'

Her wishes were fulfilled; Lady Vesey met the stranger with such humble dignity, such sweetness (so peculiar to herself), that the Doctor was greatly affected. Common conversation ensued: he was very cheer-

ful; she all attention. When he arose to take leave, 'Tell me, Doctor,' said she, 'what ground has my dear Sir Ralph for hope, as to the affair of the deed? I dread his being too sanguine.' 'Madam, Sir Ralph has the surest ground to trust upon: I verily believe the identical paper, and a large sum of money found with it, will be brought your Ladyship to-morrow morning. 'You, Sir, I cannot disbelieve. Merciful Heaven, I thank thee! Ah! my Nora, my Nora, would it were thee! Then hiding her tears in Sir Ralph's bosom, she soon resumed her calmness. 'Leave me, gentlemen, I entreat you, lest my wayward head should wander. Pray, Doctor, deign to a poor weak woman another visit to-morrow; you will find me calm, very calm.'

The gentlemen retired. Sir Ralph

received comfortable assurances from Doctor Scot that Lady Vesey's lowness proceeded not from insanity. They naturally fell into family discourse.— Sir Ralph expatiated fully upon every adverse event of his life. The Doctor requested his being very explicit as to his lost daughter, thinking that might be the source of Lady Vesey's melancholy, and wishing to be master of a subject to which she would probably lead. 'I must, my good Sir,' said Sir Ralph, 'be as succinct as possible.

'From Nora's earliest dawn of reason (and early was it), she was all her doating parents could wish; and, even in less partial eyes, esteemed a paragon of sense, modesty, sweetness, beauty. The presumptive heiress of my large fortune, proposal after proposal of marriage was made me in her favour,

from the greatest families: we were in no haste to part with our darling, and always designed she should choose for herself. When near sixteen, my old friend and fellow traveller, Lord Staffa, (a Scottish Earl) made me a visit (and a long one) in his way to town, bringing with him his second son, Mr. Murray, as fine a youth as ever existed. My old friend was as artful as we were undesigning; and assuredly the plan was fabricated in Scotland. Nora and Murray (seemingly formed for each other) soon discovered their fervent yet innocent attachment; neither denied it, for they were children of truth. My wife and I were delighted with her choice; whilst Lord Staffa paraded much upon the subject of his son's inferiority.

The whole affair was soon deter-



mined. On our parts, we insisted upon Mr. Murray's travelling for two years : not that polishment was necessary, but as a test of both the young people's constancy. They bid each other a sorrowful adieu. Nora returned to her usual routine of employments, was acquiescent and cheerful. My wife had been for some time in such a questionable state of health as awakened mine and Nora's fears. One morning I saw her enter my library, with such blooming joy in her face as astonished me. "My dear father," said she, "we have reason only for joy; Doctor Markham is come, and has just declared, what he has long apprehended, that mamma is within three months of lying-in." I was transfixed with joy on her safety, with delight at my dear girl's disinterested satisfaction, and

with chagrin, lest a male heir should supersede her claims; for every thing was entailed on a son; and, alas! thinking I should have none, I had saved nothing. On my daughter's most noble behaviour upon so trying an occasion, on her infinite fondness for the little superseding boy, I cannot dwell. My honour led me to write an immediate account to Lord Staffa, that Miss Vesey, in all probability, would not long be an heiress; promising that I would, in my future days, endeavour, by the strictest economy, to provide for my daughter; for then Lord Aumerl had not made his claim.

Lingering was the reply; it shewed me the real man; a man whom I had rated, alas! by externals only. The letter was brutal. He had, he said, only consented to his second son's silly

attachment to my daughter, because he could not, without injuring his eldest son, leave him in the splendour becoming a son of Murray, descended from the Scottish Kings.

‘ A finish was put to the treaty. Lord Staffa sent his son (his rebel he called him) to serve in the Netherlands, accompanied with his curse, should he ever again revisit Britain unsent for; and with a solemn vow, on such return, to expose him to beggary.

‘ My heroic girl endured even this heart-corroding sorrow with amazing calmness and fortitude: her only comfort was the assurance that Mr. Murray was more an object of pity than of blame; and we were unanimous in that belief. Within three months I received such a letter from this worthy

young man, that, if it was possible, endeared him more tenderly than ever to us all. Not one harsh expression did he use relative to his father: he declared Nora absolutely free; but in such a manner as shewed how much the declaration cost him. He was ordered, he added, by his father to sail in a ship destined to the West Indies, or our more northern settlements, he knew not which, and would take the liberty of writing again: but since that time no letter is arrived, nor any intelligence can we gain of him. Hope has long sickened in my daughter's mind; but she is superior to every thing, and seems (alas! it is, I know, *seeming* only) to bury all her woes in the afflictions that have befallen her parents.'

Here Sir Ralph stopped and wept; then resuming the sad tale, related

Miss Vesey's noble conduct on Mr. Vesey's proposal, and her fatal loss soon afterwards, almost in the same words it had been told to Mr. Jephson.

The greatly affected and attentive listener to this sad tale tried not to stop the current of Sir Ralph's woe; but when somewhat more calmed, reasoned so highly, so justly, on the inscrutable ways of Providence, on the attributes of justice and mercy, and on the great duty of man's absolute reliance on the Supreme Being, that Sir Ralph declared he retired for the night a contented and acquiescent man.

CHAP. V.

BY agreement, the following morning Doctor Scot had the pleasure of presenting the recovered deed and unexpected treasure to Lady Vesey: she received the important deposit without apparent agitation; but by no means was she deficient in her grateful acknowledgments towards Providence for thus having preserved her family from imminent ruin. ‘How shall we,’ said Lady Vesey, ‘ever acknowledge properly Doctor Scot’s active goodness in this discovery? Though a woman, I will not ask him any questions, however impelled by curiosity, relative to

his informant; because you, my dear Sir Ralph, think it distresses him.'

'Madam,' replied the Doctor, 'I abhor mystery; but the time is not come, soon and happy it will prove! when, by that informant's permission, I may acquaint your family and friends with some extraordinary circumstances.'

As Sir Ralph and the Doctor had settled their morning plan; the former went to call upon a worthy neighbour, and the latter, by my Lady's desire, remained with her. Some hours they passed in very earnest discourse—it cannot here transpire—suffice it to say, that Sir Ralph, delighted, found the Doctor and Lady Vesey walking in the picture-gallery; and heard she designed joining their dinner party.

'This,' said Sir Ralph, 'is the first

ray of real happiness that has darted upon me; why, Doctor, you are assuredly a conjurer.'

'Yes, truly,' replied the lady, 'he has exorcised all the blue devils away: my mind is at ease; but remember, Sir, you are to ask no questions till the time of general developement arrives.'

Sir Thomas Hazzlerig's early reply to Sir Ralph's announcement of the deed's recovery glowed with tints of lively joy, unmixed with the parade of sentiment. He reported having consulted Lord Southampton and a very eminent lawyer on the subject. They were unanimous in advising an authenticated copy of the paper being taken, and left with Sir Ralph; whilst the original, sent by a safe person, should be deposited in unquestionable secu-



rity in London : absolute secrecy, and no alteration in mode of life, were thought most eligible. After the important paper was safely lodged in town, Sir Thomas wished Mr. Weston, a neighbouring gentleman, and friend of both families, might accidentally mention the discovery, as from report, to Lord Aumerl, whereby a judgment might be formed how he would receive a proper and legal notification of Sir Ralph's fortunate discovery.

Sir Ralph expecting his friend Jephson daily, with whose worthiness and singularity Doctor Scot was, on report, wonderfully pleased, it was agreed that he was the person, of all others, most proper for the negociation of this business ; and he came by noon the following day, bursting with impati-

ence, and inflated with hope. Marmaduke met him at the gate; forgetful of the secrecy himself had enforced, he instantly cried, 'Is the Doctor come?' 'Yes.' 'Is it found?' Marmaduke, somewhat deaf, thinking the latter interrogation related to Miss Vesey, replied, 'No, no such thing, though search is made still: no, no! no such good fortune attends poor Master and Lady!'

Disappointment and rage at Doctor Scot immediately rendered the lawyer half frantic; giving his favourite horse a severe lash, he turned him loose, and with hasty strides proceeded to the Castle.

It was a very wet day, and unfortunately Doctor Scot had just entered the house, wrapt up in a rough great

coat, lent him by the civil bailiff of Lord Aumerl, who had remained long as possession-keeper of the Castle. This man was, in truth, as the servants agreed, one of the best behaved persons; and Doctor Scot had frequently observed, 'This bailiff of Lord Aumerl is my shadow; I frequently talk to him familiarly, and yet he seems embarrassed.'

Jephson, when last at Battleridge, had often seen him, at a distance only, and in that identical great coat, and knowing to whom he belonged, harboured a violent hatred towards the wearer of it, supposing he was Lord Aumerl's servant. Entering the hall just as Doctor Scot, with his coat on, was wiping his shoes on a mat; Jephson's spleen being afloat, he flew upon

the good man. 'What has such a profligate, puritanic, impudent fellow as you to do in Sir Ralph's great hall? get you among your equals, or I will kick you down!'

Just at that instant Sir Ralph entered the hall, and seizing the enraged lawyer, cried, 'My dear Jephson, what demon possesses you? do you not know my worthy friend, Doctor Scot?' 'I cry your mercy, Sir Ralph! I have mistaken him for one of the infernals belonging to Aumerl.' 'Worthy Mr. Jephson,' said the Doctor, offering his hand, 'admit me to your friendship; even this little effervescence of warmth, agitated through true friendship to Sir Ralph, endears you greatly to me.' The lawyer scanning the divine with still no favourable aspect, extended his

hand, in a stiff and freezing manner. 'Come with me, Jephson,' said the Knight; 'and get your boots off in the the lobby; dinner is coming in.' The servant passing by directly with the first dish, no eclaircissement took place, save Jephson's saying, 'All persons are alike false; nothing is found, I find.' Sir Ralph inferring from hence the real cause of his friend's ill humour, and willing to divert himself with Jephson's peculiar trait of character, stepped first into the parlour. 'My dear Doctor,' said he, 'this wrathful man thinks you have been unsuccessful, and is primed to be pouty; let us enjoy the pleasure of discovery by a little delay; and pray, Lady Vesey, retire soon after dinner, fetch the deed, and slip it unseen in my pocket.'

The lawyer was seated next the

Doctor at dinner; he rather turned from him, his mouth became pursed up, except now and then, when distended in what is called a dripping-pan form, downwards; his eyes were often cast upwards, and his great thumbs twirling round each other, over his protuberant body. 'You don't like the fish, Mr. Jephson, I fear?' 'Yes, my Lady, but I have no stomach, no, not I; my neighbour, I see, supplies my wants: the clergy have charming appetites; their tongues are glib at every thing—eating, talking, promising.'

In this innuendo-stile Jephson dealt all dinner time, to the very great amusement of his companions. No sooner were the things removed than Sir Ralph began thus: 'Really Doctor, I have many pardons to ask of you

for the pointedly rude behaviour of this my friend. How, Jephson, can your high church principles defend bruising thus cruelly the bending reed? Do not our clerical friends, the best friends to our King, suffer sufficiently in these heterodox times, without falling under your lash?

Jephson's good heart and honest principles flushed instant conviction upon his mind; he turned to the Doctor with a now extended hand: 'Sir, I humbly crave your pardon; no one honours Church and King more than myself. I was ever cursedly warm and head-strong, nor can I mince matters; Doctor, my very heart and soul were set upon your finding this noble gentleman's lost deed—it is not discovered; why did you promise and not perform? It looks so Jesuitical; but,

mayhap, you meant well. Here, honourable Sir Ralph Vesey, is the thousand pounds promised, and never was money more willingly given.' 'My dear and generous friend,' replied Sir Ralph, 'times are changed, I do not want it, I——' 'Nay, but for Heaven you shall have it; we have plenty, and Peggy charged me not to bring sixpence back. No, no, I fear me you will not want it for the best purpose, but abroad the money shall go, either with you or after you, for we cannot bear that two such worthy gentlefolks should want for any thing, when such as we have more than enough, and I am getting and getting every day. Tomorrow I shall be off by dawn of day, I cannot bear to stay now; but God bless you all, and you too, Doctor, into the bargain.' So saying, out of the



room he hastened; and having, according to custom, given himself an universal shake, as often poor wearied post-horses do, when they stop at their inn, and taken a few turns in the air, he was preparing to return to the much affected company.

‘ Dear Sir Ralph, ‘ said the Doctor, ‘ hasten the balm of discovery into that wounded worthy mind, and re-instate me into the good man’s favour.’

‘ Well, my friend,’ said Sir Ralph to Jephson on his entrance, ‘ let us drink absent friends, and other loyal healths, have a little chat, and enjoy ourselves; I say not a word against your going to-morrow, and think it will be round by London, for I must take your advice as to the future provision and security of my boy; and lest any turn of good fortune should attend us, would

desire your opinion of a paper drawn up to that purpose; which I wish to transmit to my friends in town: will you be so kind as to peruse it? Doctor Scot highly commends it; but he is no lawyer.' 'No, no, nor nothing—but a good man, as you say, and as he looks to be; for I will say, his aspect is favourable.' Jephson took the deed carelessly, and twirling his glass over it, was beginning to abuse Obadiah; till the Doctor, an abhorrer of all detraction, reminded him of Sir Ralph's request. He leizurely opened the parcel. 'Tied confoundedly tight!' muttered Jephson.—'What, had you no better parchment than this dirty daub to write your will upon? Why, I would have brought you a skin.' Out dropped the supplemental note, signed

*Aumerl.* It was thrown away in a rage. 'Shew me none of your accursed Aumerls. How came that here? Merciful Heaven! what do I see? The very identical conveyance! Curse you all for keeping me in ignorance one moment!'

A burst of succeeding passions, joy, hope, shame—all for some moments retarded Mr. Jephson's speech—when, catching Sir Ralph's hand, 'The day's our own, dear man! My Lady, excuse me,' (heartily saluting Lady Vesey); then, dropping on his knees to the Doctor, 'Blessed son of Heaven,' continued he, 'forgive your weak brother!—you are indeed, for I know you brought it, the man of men; and whilst I have two-pence you shall have a penny. Tell me this moment who

told you of this deed? Where was it found? When was it found?’

The Doctor readily and copiously replied to the last interrogations, evading dexterously answering the first, though pressed hard by the Lawyer, much against the requests of Sir Ralph and his Lady.

Mr. Jephson being brought down to par, willingly went to business. The deed was properly copied; and early next morning he set forward with it to town, attended by a trusty stout quondam tenant of Sir Ralph's; and the agreeable news of its safe lodgement in London was early announced, by express to Battleridge.

The following morning Sir Ralph called in his worthy neighbour, Mr. Weston, to council; who, with cheer-

ful alacrity, agreed to carry Doctor Scot with him on a visit of observation to Lord Aumerl's. Mr. Weston was a private, independent, frugal man, and thereby enabled to be an hospitable gentleman. He had sat in one sessions of parliament early in King Charles's reign; and, in that too despotic and arbitrary time, had imbibed strong objections to the far stretched prerogative of monarchy, and to the strides some warm churchmen took to attain secular power: he therefore became a Presbyterian; but seeing, and with many real patriots abhorring the measures taken by Oliver's adherents, as being subversive of kingly and church government, he retired early in life to his paternal possessions; became there a private, beneficent, moderate

man; and as such, was respected by all parties. He was attached from early youth to Sir Ralph Vesey; and though still dissenting from him in religion, ever sympathized in his troubles, and had been most liberal in pecuniary offers to that worthy sufferer.

CHAP. VI.

WHEN Mr. Weston and Doctor Scot arrived at Aumerl Castle, as the former had predicted, admittance was not easily gained: but at length the name of Weston became a passport. 'Strange,' said he, 'this barricading of late! So like the baronical times! but old age is fearful and suspicious.'

The visitants were conducted thro' a crowd of servants, more resembling Presbyterian teachers than the lacqueys attendant on nobility. Introduction was not the mode of that age; therefore Mr. Weston performed not the part of a nomenclator to Doctor Scot. The

appearance of a stranger increased the native suspicion of Lord Aumerl, and augmented the natural gloom of Obadiah. The conversation, therefore, was embarrassed: my Lord's variety of complaints and infirmities suggested what communication there was; and his looks abundantly verified these assertions; for he appeared extremely old and debilitated; was very tremulous; yet still his eye was piercing, and his apprehension quick and strong. 'But of no account,' said Lord Aumerl, 'is the failure of such a muck-worm as myself, when compared with what this sinful gain-saying nation, full of abomination and idolatry, ought to feel when reflecting on the decaying health of the lamp of Israel! Since the death of his Highness's favourite child, Mrs. Claypole, we hear the



Lord Protector wains both in health and spirits: he has an agueish complaint, yet seeks no aid from the healers; and when not absorbed in business, broods lonely over his departed darling. When this king of the Almighty's elect is removed to the New Jerusalem, shall we not all say, the horse and the chariot of Israel are fallen? But enough of threatened woe. Can you not, my respected and respectful neighbour, tell us something new?'

Mr. Weston, in his good-natured manner, then retailed the harmless part of the neighbourhood's gossip, concluding thus:—'I perceive, my Lord, by your cheerful look, you credit not the report which circulates round Battleridge Castle.' 'What! what! what?' earnestly asked my Lord and his son. 'It is confidently

said Sir Ralph Vesey has recovered the mislaid deeds of Battleridge.'

Obadiah, being off his guard, became equally enraged and abusive, menacing Sir Ralph with revenge, and declaring that the Aumerl estates should be spent to secure Battleridge. My Lord, refined by cunning, and an adept in hypocrisy, took a contrary part.

'If so it is,' said he, 'the Lord forbid I should injure my neighbour and my near kinsman! Give me your authority, neighbour Weston?'

'My Lord, it is a general affirmation. This gentleman is an inmate with Sir Ralph, and will reply to your interrogatories.'

They were immediately offered: to which Doctor Scot replied: 'I am well assured, Gentlemen, that the deed was

found in an old coffer; that the copy of it remains for your Lordship's inspection, if required; and that the original is safely lodged in London.'

Obadiah became inarticulate through rage. My Lord, ever present with himself, and still possessing a masculine understanding, with uplifted hands and elevated eyes, thus replied: 'With holy Eli I cry, It is the Lord; let him do what seemeth him good! Heaven forbid I should seize unlawfully, or withhold unjustly, my nephew's rights; or relinquish pusillanimously the rights of that pious son. Methinks my nephew Vesey might have sent a messenger more meet than to offer me defiance. I perceive, Sir, by your ragged rusty cassock, as I think they term that vain garment, you are of the church of Antichrist; you follow

the cursed and cursing sectaries who ascend Mount Ebab; I know ye all. Son Obadiah, (who was beginning a torrent of abuse) refrain from wrath, and bridle thy tongue whilst the adversary is present. Neighbour Weston, on this, and all emergencies, let us seek the Lord; therefore bid that wandering Levite descend and sojourn with my people in the hall, whilst we betake ourselves unto prayer.'

The Doctor obeyed; and joined the heterogeneous tribe who tenanted the large entrance room. What a group! and how shocking such a *coup d'oeil* to the good Doctor! Over the chimney was placed a calf's head skeleton, labelled *Charles Stewart*; attended on the right by a wolf's skull, covered with lamb's wool, bearing the name of *Laud*; whilst that of a fox presented

the respectful appellation of *Strafford*, attended as a supporter on the left. The walls were filled with quotations from Scripture, interlarded with passages from the pamphlets of those days, calculated to subvert the church and state. In one corner of the hall a group of fellows were employed in buffoonery; in another, elevated on a tub, a Puritanic preacher was holding forth; whilst those of a more melancholy turn were shuddering over Mary's fiery reign, and studying Fox's Book of Martyrs. The Doctor's melancholy reverie was shortly roused by the entrance of a fat cook, whose acrid language to her fellow servants ill accorded with her remarkably open pleasant countenance: she particularly levelled her ire at a vast ill-looking athletic man, calling him a cursed

Irishman, the promoter of all wickedness and mischief: when, turning towards the Doctor, she said, 'I pray you, Sir, to step into my pantry, and take some refreshment; for Squire Weston's man says you are a good gentleman, and unfit to stay with these fellows.'

The placid man acknowledging her kindness, acquiesced, and followed her into the culinary region.

In less than a quarter of an hour Obadiah entered, with furious looks, followed by his champion, O'Connor, the above mentioned Irishman, and thus began: 'Tell him all about it, do you say?' for the cook was uttering that sentence—'About what? How dare you, you impertinent hussey, harbour strangers and enemies thus?' 'I dare any thing,' replied Deborah,

‘ more than you dare part with me : his Lordship can eat no one’s cookery but mine; and your Worship also loves gluttoning. Why, I was a going to tell this gentleman how that cruel bloody O’Connor threw poor Twirler into the fire for getting under his feet: the best turnspit us ever had !’

‘ Come, you fellow !’ said Obadiah to the Doctor—‘ come along with us to the stable-yard, and there wait till his Worship, Squire Weston, calls you to return.’ And that was within a few minutes.

Mr. Weston, with his usual openness, lamented to the Doctor, as they passed homewards, the unfavourable aspect which appeared at Aumerl. ‘ They will fight every inch of ground : my friend Vesey has nothing to trust to

but the uprightness of his cause, and the Protector's strict adherence to justice; for even your brethren, Doctor, must own that when once made our supreme governor, justice has been a principal hinge on which his well-established and wise government turns; and I hear of late his nature is much softened to every appeal from the distressed; some aver, from the incessant admonitions made him by his lately departed, and now sainted daughter, Claypole.

‘May it be so, for the sake of his poor soul!’ and this was almost the only words the Doctor uttered, seeming greatly agitated and distressed.

On their return to Battleridge, this good man's usual cheerfulness gave way to thought and absence: he



begged leave to spend the afternoon in his chamber; and at supper requested a further dispensation of absence.

The worthy Knight and Lady Vesey, alarmed for his health, ventured to make personal enquiries: they found their friend in deep meditation: when, throwing off the melancholy mood, he aimed even at alacrity, becoming quite spirited.

‘All this, my dear good Doctor,’ said gentle Lady Vesey, ‘is outward seeming; you are ill, or have heard afflicting intelligence: tell, oh! tell us all! any thing is preferable to suspense!’

‘In truth, Madam, I am perfectly well; and perhaps never had less cause for gloom: my head ach is going off.’

Lady Vesey, stepping up quick to

the Doctor, with clasped hands and bent knees, cried, ' Ah! you have heard of my child's, my Nora's death; and, carrying your ideas beyond this world, rejoice in her unquestionable happiness!'

' As I hope for that happiness, my dear Lady, I have not.'

' Then you have collected somewhat unfavourable relative to our worldly concerns?'

' So far from it, I have not a doubt that within a few weeks this noble Castle will revert to its deserving owner. Yet, Madam and Sir, my mysterious appearance must be continued. To-morrow, very early, I shall set forward for London; nor can the cause be at present assigned—What can you think of me?'

‘ Every thing that is great, good, and friendly,’ replied Sir Ralph.

‘ Oh!’ cried Lady Vesey, ‘ what will become of me when the Genius, the Restorer, the Guardian of Battle-ridge leaves us? Should my terrors return, poor Sir Ralph! what would you do with me? I will not be impertinent; but as a woman, I cannot repress all curiosity—How long shall you stay, Doctor? Pray bring with you, when we are rendered happy by your return, Mrs. Scot and all your family?’

‘ I am confident Lady Vesey will never place her trust on poor fallible man, when she has professedly so entire a reliance on the all-gracious Father of the universe. How often have I heard her express the warmest approbation of that uncommon firmness

of mind, that almost masculine courage, which is lodged in the feminine and fair form of her beauteous daughter; and which, I doubt not, will be the secondary cause of preserving her from every species of evil. I wish I could satisfy curiosity so natural, so laudable, and to me so obliging: I may venture to hint; it is Sir Ralph's and your Ladyship's business to infer. Poor wicked Oliver Cromwell verges towards eternity—What a thought!—A very happy Restoration may probably take place. Though the lowest of the low wheels in the machine, I must get to the metropolis speedily; for even this sag of mechanism may promote the interest thereby of a family truly dear to all loyal good people.

‘And why am I,’ said Sir Ralph, with a cheek encrimsoned with anger, ‘to be kept from this mighty secret? Have I, alas! lived to see that fatal day wherein my loyalty is questioned, my fidelity and secrecy suspected?’

‘Sir Ralph,’ replied Doctor Scot, ‘if my lips are sealed, it is through tenderness of a friend, who holds you in that high estimation you deserve. At this particular and delicate juncture to leave Battleridge in possession of Lord Aumerl’s people would be madness: in this one further instance trust to me. In a few days Sir Thomas Hazzlerig will write to you upon the subject.’

‘I have rested my faith on Doctor Scot, and will again place implicit confidence in him; therefore not a word more.’

‘So say I,’ said Lady Vesey—‘but how do you travel, Sir? Ours, alas! are untenanted stables!’

‘Oh, my Lady! a certain Genius befriends me; and will, at early dawn to morrow, appear before your portal in the shapes of two stout horses and a trusty guide.’

‘See,’ said Lady Vesey, ‘and admire my silent acquiescence: but I must retire.’

Soon she returned, and putting a small sealed parcel in the Doctor’s hands, ‘Take these pieces,’ said she—‘take them as a test of my friendship: take them, and make thereby your travelling commodious. Heaven protect and reward you!’

So saying she left the room;—nor did Sir Ralph remain long after; he

was too much affected to take a formal leave, or bid a rhetorical adieu to his family preserver, as he justly stiled Doctor Scot.

CHAP. VII.

THE Doctor left Battleridge very early the next morning, which proved a heavy day to Sir Ralph and Lady Vesey. They marvelled much at their servants' report of Lord Aumerl's bailiff having absconded. Towards evening he returned, attended by the furious O'Connor, Obadiah's servant, who said he came, by Lord Aumerl's order, to supersede the then possession-keeper of the Castle.

Poor Lady Vesey was terrified so greatly by the exchange that Sir Ralph sent for several of his old and willing tenants to sleep in the house as guards.



When Sir Ralph and Lady Vesey retired together for the night, for my Lady would not part one moment from her husband, she became pale as death at hearing a gentle knocking in her closet. Sir Ralph opened the door. Smith, Lord Aumerl's original possession-keeper, appeared.

'Pardon me, Sir Ralph and my good Lady,' said he, 'I am your bounden friend: I have been at Aumerl all day, to give notice that to morrow I leave my Lord's service, being obliged to go far away to succour some suffering friends; and a sad abusive day I have spent there; regardless of threats, and not heeding my Lord's unwillingness to let me depart; but I was resolute, and they are all cowardly. I did all I could to keep O'Connor from coming; but your Honours' may be sure he will

not tarry long; for I heard Mr. Obadiah say to him, he should neither eat, drink, nor sleep, till O'Connor returned to guard him. Keep him from liquor, and have some stout men in the house, and then he will be quiet. I would not for a hundred pounds have any soul know I have spoken to your Honours; and therefore hid myself here. Heaven bless you both! you and your servants have been very good to me!

Smith was retiring, when my Lady offering some money, he clapped his hands behind him, 'No, no: not a farthing till better days come!' Nor would he satisfy any one of the many questions Sir Ralph put to him.

By adhering to Smith's advice, O'Connor was kept very quiet; and as predicted, on the third day summoned

back to Aumerl; when a less terrific person supplied his place.

About a week after Doctor Scot's departure, a very genteel looking young man, attended by six servants, demanded audience of Sir Ralph, presenting, as an introduction, this short billet, signed *Hazzlerig*:

“Receive Captain Bridgman, the bearer; adhere to all he says: leave him and his attendants in your house; and directly, with your wife and boy, set forward for London.”

‘Sir,’ said Sir Ralph, somewhat hurried, ‘your appearance is not military.’

‘Purposely avoided,’ replied Captain Bridgman—‘but I have the honour of commanding, under Sir Thomas Hazzlerig, a company in his Highness's Guards; and the stout men

you see are all picked out of our corps. We are ordered to remain quiet here; not as soldiers, but to keep possession of the house and premises till other of your honest friends arrive. I am ordered by Sir Thomas and one Doctor Scot to recommend your's and your Lady's going forthwith to his Worship Squire Weston's, whose coach will be ready to convey you till you are met by my Lord of Southampton's equipage, who commands me to say, that apartments are prepared for your Honour and her Ladyship, with your son, in Southampton-House.

Lady Vesey was greatly alarmed and agitated by this hasty summons; yet her good sense prevailed over every feminine fear, and she acceded willingly to Sir Thomas Hazzlerig's advice. Unused of late years to travel,

and weakened both in body and mind, at an inn within thirty miles of London she was seized with an alarming illness; yet how much soever Sir Ralph was wanted by his friends in town, he would not for a minute leave her apartment.

On the first day she quitted her chamber, Doctor Scot appeared, booted, and in the *en passant* stile. 'Here comes,' said Sir Ralph, 'our man of mystery, doubtless to develope and disburthen.' The Doctor, shaking his head and smiling, replied, 'Not a word of that, believe me, any further than that I am sent down by the higher powers to do the honours of your Castle; and there receive Sir Thomas Hazzlerig, who is going to Aumerl, on the high behests of recovering your Honour's rights.'

‘Strange the mode, assuredly!’ replied Sir Ralph—‘Methinks the demand should rather come from the gentlemen of the long robe than from the military.’

‘Sir Ralph, you are in the best hands; the Protector supports your cause, even against a brother of the Elect. May Heaven record his justice! and may it soften his early expected audit! and we act entirely by his commands.’

This was all the Doctor advanced in the happy hour he spent with his friends, who, the following day, reached Southampton House; where we will leave them, returning with Doctor Scot to Battleridge; and there, with the eye of retrospection, trace the cause of his reserved behaviour to its source—to the interview he had with

Deborah, Lord Aumerl's cook, in her pantry.

Instead of offering the refreshments promised to Doctor Scot, he observed the cook, on various pretences, sent away her scullions and attendants, when, creeping close to him, in an half whisper she said, ' Pardon me, forsooth, I pray your Reverence; his Worship Weston's man told me who you was: as sure as life Miss Vesey is confined in our chained chamber, up in yonder tower. Our poor Lord Noddy, as they call my Lord's eldest son out of scorn, though his title is Scaleby (Lord help me! how they do use that poor harmless helpless soul!) says a lady is there; and I told John Smith, our bailiff, now at Battleridge-House; and he has wished many a time to tell you, but thought you would

not believe any thing a servant of my Lord's would say—yet you may; for an honest man never trod in shoe leather. We have kept company a many years, and are tired of the wickedness of this house. I was brought up in old Madam Vesey's kitchen, and I do love that family. I pray you, take pity on poor Miss, and try to free her: speak to John Smith, and he will tell you all about it.'

At that very instant Obadiah and O'Connor, as has been related, entered the kitchen, and a stop was put to this most interesting conference.

After such distressful intelligence, it is no wonder the Doctor's gentle humane mind became discomposed; and that, upon his return to Battleridge, he appeared absent and silent. Silent, as to the doubtful information told



him, he determined to be till he could unravel the truth of this late assertion.

Meeting Smith, the bailiff, on his return from Aumerl, the Doctor privately desired to see him in his bed-chamber after dinner. When this honest man had heard Doctor Scot's retailed account of Deborah's impeachment, he thus replied: 'Yes, Sir; and true enough it is; and many and many's the time I wished to tell you of it; for methought I could say anything to such a courteous gentleman. Yes, Sir; I do believe poor Miss is the Lady shut up there; for a lady there is; but how, or when she came, Deborah knows not. You have heard of our poor foolish Lord Scaleby? Lord help us! if he is foolish, they have rendered him so: he was always for King Charles, and that made my Lord hate

him; whilst Mr. Obadiab, his younger brother, was always for those he could get most by; and hating and envying his elder brother, easily enraged my Lord against him.

• First, he was confined, lest he should join the Cavaliers: he was always a tender man in body and mind; want of air and exercise threw Lord Scaleby into a slow fever, and he became very low spirited. This they termed madness; and O'Connor coming soon after, was made his Lordship's keeper, as he called himself; and they shut him up in a dismal chamber, with only some straw to lie upon; and it would make your heart bleed to know how O'Connor lashes him. He has not been shaved for years, and his nails are like claws. It is a mighty merriment to them to call him Nebu-

chadnezzar, to turn him out in the back court, and make him crawl and eat grass; O'Connor standing over him with a whip, whilst his father—shame on the old Lord!—will look out of the window, and quite chuckle at their wickedness.

‘By this means Lord Scaleby is really become almost an idiot, though Deborah, who is mortal good to him, says he is not. Mrs. Prudence, our house-keeper, carries up his food; and she too would be good to him if she dared; but, though she has long been concubine both to my Lord and Mr. Vesey, she doats so on O'Connor, that she is quite his slave. Pity! for the woman has a many good qualities, and is very tender-hearted. Whenever my Lord, his Honour Vesey, and O'Connor, go out, Madam Prudence

will take poor Lord Scaleby into the garden, and bring him into her room; and there some of us old servants crowd about him, and he will often appear sensible, and seems very much delighted.

About a month ago Madam Prudence was very ill; so Deborah carried up Lord Scaleby's dinner. He always claps his hands with joy to see her; and taking about half the meat off the trencher, said, "Pray ye, Deborah, carry that to the poor pretty lady; don't starve the poor pretty lady in the chained chamber; for Prudence now can't feed her."

"Hold your nonsense, Sir," cried Deborah, "and talk like a man."

His Lordship stuck to his point; and on his knees, with tears, begged the poor pretty lady might not be

starved. Deborah feigned anger. "I saw her," said my Lord, "peep out one day at that door," (pointing to a door at the end of the gallery, in which his chamber was)—"and I saw her once in the night through the hole in this door, when Prudence put her in. Pray don't tell O'Connor:" and then he trembled through fear.

' This made Deborah full of thought, and she begins to put things together; like as having minded how particular Madam Prudence was of late about carrying Lord Scaleby niceties; and then she bethought her how the laundry-maid said, what a world of linen Mrs. Prudence used; and yet she seemed as dirty as ever: so Deborah shammed sick, and shutting herself up in a press in the before-mentioned gallery, saw, through a crevice, Pru-

dence bring up some victuals, unlock the further gallery-door, which opens into a little dark passage leading to the chained chamber, where my old Lord's grand-father always slept, and kept his treasures, and knock at the further door. Deborah heard the inside bolts draw; but could not see so far what they were at; but she heard a pretty voice say, "Thank you!"

Prudence replied, "As I hope to live, my Lady, all the gentlemen are out, and I do wish you would let down the chain, and come out for some air."

"No," said the voice—"I trust nobody, though you are very good to me; and never will unloose this providential chain till the Almighty sends me a deliverer whom I know."

Deborah soon tells me this; and

we both thought it must be Miss Vesey, though a many said she was drowned, and one or two swore they saw her walk in. We were grievously posed what to do. I would have taxed O'Connor with it; for I am as stout as he is; but Deborah would not let me; as she said he would way-lay and murder me. So then I thought of you, Doctor: and I am as glad as if I got a thousand pounds that you know of it; for you are a good gentleman, and will see the poor lady righted.'

'I doubt not, Mr. Smith,' replied the Doctor, 'that this injured lady is Miss Vesey; and I doubt not of the Almighty's proving her safe-guard. Can you guess by what means she was conveyed to Aumerl? and do you think Obadiah ever sees her?'

'That, Sir, we know not; but are

sure there never is any noise in the house; and his Honour Obadiah lives just as he used to do, praying with my Lord, and preaching to the servants when at home: but he and O'Connor are much abroad, night and day: they have keys of the postern-gates, which lead through the Holly-walks into the Park; and there is a stair-case opens into the garden, from the south tower, leading to the armory, over which is the chained chamber; and by that way, I warrant, they brought the poor lady into the house. My Lord and his son were always frightful people, afraid of every stranger; but now are more timorsome than ever. Deborah has heard that the slaughter-house for the deer is now turned into a stable—it is at the end of the Holly-walk—and there, it is said, two of my Lord's nags



are kept constantly saddled; but no one goes near them except O'Connor.'

'Well! Mr. Smith,' was the reply, 'neither here nor hereafter will your honesty remain unrewarded. I will commune with myself an hour, and then meet you in Fern-bottom. If required, would you go with me to London, and there swear to what you have said, before Sir Thomas Hazzlerig?'

'Sir, I will go round the world with your Reverence, to serve Sir Ralph and my good Lady; for they are good to their enemies, as they thought me. I neither love nor fear my Lord, or any of the pack; yet I won't leave him tartly and without notice, lest he should revenge himself on poor Deborah. One good turn, forsooth, de-

serves another, as you, Sir, knows very well.'

Smith bowed, retired, and met the Doctor again at the time and place appointed.

'Well! my friend,' said Doctor Scot, 'I have weighed the matter, and determined to the best of my judgment. Upon the consideration of Sir Ralph's high spirit, the low spirits of my Lady, and the possibility that the imprisoned lady may not be Miss Vesey, we will determine to say not one word to any one of our suspicions and designs. I will go to London directly, there to consult Sir Ralph's best friends; and you will join me at my little cot, on the out-skirts of Kentish Town, as soon as you can disengage yourself from Lord Aumerl.'

Smith, assuring Doctor Scot he would not be long after him in town, and promising to provide horses and a guide for him next morning, they parted, mutually satisfied with each other.

CHAP. VIII.

WHEN Doctor Scot stopped at his own little habitation—to such an husband, such a father, ever a first object!—the joy which beamed from every inhabitant of this neat abode excited a radiance on each dear countenance, seldom seen in the sumptuous abodes of the lofty. The little ones clung round him: Mrs. Scot met him with those smiles which first captivated his tender heart, accompanied with that grace which even extreme poverty never for a single moment had shrouded: his two beautiful daughters, though clad in the plainest garb, requisite for pursuing

their domestic employments, appeared with those bewitching charms that ever accompanied their mother; yet a respect and deference, in those days prevalent in children to their parents, distinguished the daughter from the wife.

‘What thanks,’ said the Doctor, ‘do I owe the Almighty in thus again viewing all these dear and animated countenances so healthy! these lilies of the field have indeed been under his peculiar fostering!’

All the young ones longed to tell their father (all together) every thing that had happened during his absence; but seeing their mother begin to speak, their loquacity ceased.

‘Yes, indeed,’ said she, ‘my dear Doctor, Heaven, for your sake doubtless, has raised us many supporting

friends: persons whom I knew not in this village, and of all parties, have been very liberal to us; not that the unremitting kindness and munificence of Mr. Talmash rendered such benevolence necessary.'

Little Harry could not hold out any longer. 'Mamma, mamma,' said the little boy, 'now tell papa all about brother Charles.'

'Yes, my child,' said she. 'Why, my dearest, your eldest son, placed so kindly by Mr. Talmash with a Barbadoes planter, has sent you a remittance of three hundred pounds.'

'Aye, indeed, papa,' says the next boy, 'he says he did not beat the poor blackamoors to get it.'

This was too much for our philosopher; he was obliged to retire.

To pass from these pleasant domes-

tic tales into the higher walks of life, we will next accompany the Doctor and Mr. Talmash to Sir Thomas Hazzlerig's. That zealous friend received the retailed account of the proceedings at Aumerl with little less composure than honest Lawyer Jephson would have done on a like development. He called loudly for revenge, for justice, execrating the Puritan's hypocrisy and deceit; and, with an oath, unbecoming one of their followers, declared he had long been tired of them. This triumvirate, by agreement, passed on to the venerable Lord Southampton's: his moderation was the leading trait of a gentle and beneficent character, and showed itself in a kind of horror that such wickedness could be veiled under such a semblance of

piety as the old Earl of Aumerl had always displayed.

‘ This black affair,’ said my Lord to his cousin Hazzlerig, ‘ must be laid before our great Lord Protector. Were the injuries heaped upon Sir Ralph Vesey to be clandestinely satisfied, we owe to public justice, private faith, and to the excellent laws enacted by the Protector, that the Aumerl family should incur public odium, and meet deserved punishment; and I doubt not of his Highness’s most vigorous extension of the powers vested in him to those purposes. It is, alas! no easy matter now to gain, as usual, a ready audience; he is not well in health, and so low in spirits, that few are admitted into his presence. This man, who formerly feared nothing, by ill health, and fa-



mily afflictions, is become the child of timid fear and black suspicion: none of his household know at which of his palaces he means to repose, till he orders his coachman where to drive: all the beds in each house are ready, and no attendant is told in which he sleeps: his appetite is gone, and being much emaciated, the armour he has of late worn next his shirt, as Doctor Sydenham tells me, adds to his fatigue of body, and consequently to his languor of mind. Strange! and yet at this time surely never was any Government apparently more stable or more securely fixed, both at home and abroad. What a fragile thing is man! Your uncle Ireton (Sir Thomas) still has freer access to his person than any one else; and I doubt not, if properly informed of Lord Aumerl's wretched

manoeuvres, will not fail in reporting them to the Protector; for who is, and ever has been so zealous for the reformed religion as he is? and should this flagrant action be shadowed (it cannot be entirely veiled) by the supreme Powers, it would, indeed, be a fatal stab to the godly party.'

Lord Southampton's advice was directly followed by Sir Thomas Hazzlerig. Old Ireton's character, alas! is too well known; he was the *Ignatius Loyala* of the Puritans; his rage, therefore, evaporated in scriptural cant, which was closed with the affirmation, that were such abomination connived at, the stink of the land, like another Egypt, after its depopulating plagues, would ascend to the nostrils of the Lord of Hosts, and woe would be to this our Capernaum!

‘ But,’ added Ireton, ‘ to avoid these impending showers of fire on our land, I will in the evening, at Secretary Thurlow’s, investigate this carnal transgression thoroughly; and I beseech thee, nephew, forsooth, to bring there the Lord Aumerl’s bailiff; (now, as thou reporteth, in this city) and withal, that Doctor Scot, as thou callest him; but remember, cousin, he is a priest of the idolaters, and he may be a wolf in sheep’s cloathing, sent by the Roman Antichrist to scare and terrify, if not to seize upon the elect lambs of Jehovah’s chosen fold. I shall not turmoil our great Shepherd with this business till it is further investigated: he is afflicted of the Lord, both in body and spirit, and spends his time chiefly in self-communing and in prayer.’

Lord Southampton, with Sir Thomas Hazzlerig, were called in to the council held that evening at Secretary Thurlow's, where Doctor Scot and Mr. Smith, the impeaching Bailiff, were examined and re-examined, with all that acuteness and perplexity of question in which the Secretary and old Ireton were such adepts. But truth defies art and blandishment, it is of a bold though modest nature, and possesses internal self-possession and intrepidity. The evidence being indisputable, the witnesses were dismissed, with a degree of civility which Ireton's dismissions on like occasions seldom afforded. The truth is, Ireton was mortified almost into humility by the starting aside of that bow of the elect, as he termed Lord Aumerl, and was also somewhat awed by the strange

something, as he called it, in the soul-awakening eye of Doctor Scot.

‘Harkee, nephew,’ said he to Sir Thomas, after Dr. Scot was dismissed, ‘if this fellow of a priest be summoned before the Protector, bid him rein in his unruly member of the tongue, bid him not in vanity liken himself to Daniel, (for I doubt not he maligns our Protector with the name of Belshazzar) lest the scarlet he courts, for doubtless a Cardinal he wishes to be, be dyed with his own blood, and the chains ordered him be of iron, not gold; for I do think the Protector will command his attendance, and knowing (as he hears every thing, and is like David, a searcher after truth) he will assuredly question this man upon the strange recovery of the Battleridge deeds; and also will wish to hear from him the

account of this imprisoned woman—  
That it must, I fear, be told in this our  
Gath!—how will the sons of Philistia  
triumph!’

In what manner Oliver Cromwell received intelligence of the Aumerl iniquities, Ireton did not relate; only observed that the Protector was sorely smitten in spirit, and that the sword of the Almighty and of his Gideon should be extended in behalf of the oppressed. Doctor Scot was commanded not to quit his house, as the Protector meant to order him into the presence at a moment’s notice; but on what day, at what hour, and in what place, was not mentioned. Poor Mrs. Scot’s fears were alarmed for her husband’s personal safety, as Oliver ever was the Gog and Magog of her imagination; nor did the honest plodding

mercantile genius of Mr. Talmash greatly approve of so questionable an interview. But the good Doctor knew not fear in any cause he undertook, for they were sterling causes: he only smiled at their apprehensions, threatening he would tip the Puritan upon them.

At length, early one morn the Protectorial summons was delivered to the Doctor before he was out of bed: the messenger searched all his cloaths, and attended him into a coach which waited for them. The blinds were drawn up, the way seemed long, and trees were discovered through the crevices of the windows. When they stopped, the Doctor reconnoitered sorrowfully Hampton Court, the prison of his late Sovereign, and the place where he had often attended upon him as his chap-

lain. Being shut up in one of the long galleries, melancholy recollection brought before him the image of Charles the First, displaying to his beautiful Queen the various merits of the great Masters, whose best works his Majesty's taste had selected and placed in this gallery.

‘All gone,’ said the Doctor to himself, ‘gone among court harpies, and many sold by them for half their value, to ornament foreign courts; whilst nought but emblems and quotations from the Scriptures remain, forming a poor succedaneum to those fine pictures.’

The upper part of the gallery, which led into the royal private apartments, was railed off; and whilst the Doctor was endeavouring to assign the cause of it, the apartment opened, and out



stalked Oliver Cromwell, attended by his select friends, Ireton, old Fiennes, Lenthal, and Praise God Bare-bones, the great orator of those days. *Stalked* was the proper appellation relative to Oliver; for he looked like a ghost, pale, emaciated, and stiff, probably from concealed armour. His rolling eye meeting that of Doctor Scot, sunk beneath its penetrating influence; he half-closed his eye-lids, and seated himself in a great chair, which was placed in front, within the rail.

Ireton perceiving the Protector's embarrassment, from behind his chair, said, 'Here, you, Master Scot, come forward, and, by his Highness's command, relate all the particulars you know of an imprisoned woman at Aumerl; and mark me, be not diffuse, rhetorical, or severe.'

‘It is impossible,’ said the Doctor, ‘to be very brief in so complex an affair; rhetoric is not my forte, and I trust to give no offence, by following St. Paul’s injunction of honouring properly the Powers that be.’

The Protector, with eyes still bent downward, replied, with great condescension, and in a speech he made, lamenting Lord Aumerl’s lapse, affected not that ambiguity, and that perplexity of expression, which heretofore purposely embarrassed and rendered equivocal the subjects he treated of: nor did he deal in the cant of the times; Oliver was almost past hypocrisy, for the tribunal of truth appeared near to his tottered mind.

Doctor Scot, in the plainest manner, related all the facts required, answering adroitly every perplexing ques-

tion put to him by Oliver and his inquisitors.

‘It is too plain,’ said Oliver, ‘public inquisition must be made; nor shall favour hood-wink justice.’

Doctor Scot bowing low, with all possible deference, requested permission to add a few words further on the subject. Oliver nodded assent. The Doctor proceeded. ‘Having the honour of knowing well Sir Ralph Vesey’s opinion on this affair, permit me, Sir, (bowing still lower to Oliver) to entreat you to add to the mercy, you have ever shewn that unfortunate gentleman, the further obligation of dealing as leniently as the case will admit by the Earl of Aumerl; he appears, at worst, only as an accessory. The son and servant seem to have been the principals. Spare this poor debilitated

old Earl public shame; his faculties may be impaired, and old age is easily wrought upon.'

'This from a friend of Vesey,' said Oliver, 'is commendably candid. I am informed you found a certain deed essential to that family; give me the particulars.' The Doctor instantly obeyed. 'And who was your informant relative to the deposit of this paper?' 'Pardon me, Sir, that I am forbidden at present to relate.' Oliver, whose curiosity stood on tip-toe, grew warm, and dealt in peremptory commands. The Doctor only bowed, and was silent. Oliver talked of compulsion; said, that he was thought to have dealt with the Devil; observing, that had Doctor Scot lived under the superstitious and arbitrary reign of James, fire and faggot would have been ap-

plied to the reputed wizard; 'and why not at this time,' said he, 'as well as any other?'

Doctor Scot, calling up all the rectitude innocence and truth inspire, and fixing his eye in a marked manner on the Protector, thus replied: 'I fear not fire, faggot, or torture: my intelligencer was neither from the Most High or the most accursed; sealed secrecy closes these lips, defiancing man's power till the time, the appointed time is come for disclosure; and well I ween that time draws near.'

Oliver just then catching his discriminating eye, sunk back in his chair, appalled and speechless. 'The time you allude to,' said he, after recovering himself, 'is my death; and am I then very near death? Is yours and your brethren's exaltation and triumph

soon, perhaps this day, to take place?'  
And then he wept.

Doctor Scot's humanity extended even to the murderer of his King. 'Sir,' said he, 'none but the Almighty possesses prescience: yourself, I will venture to say, are no predestinarian in reality: be not alarmed at what, perhaps, I too sternly advanced; you look not like a dying man: no one wishes more heartily than myself that lengthened time may be granted you before the tree falls, finally there to lie, incapacitated to make restitution. With Hezekiah seek a respite; betake you to following medical help, without superstitious fear. The best have cause for repentance. You have governed this nation well. Pardon me, and accept my earnest prayers

that yourself may be wise to salvation.'

'Your prayers! and *can* you—*will* you pray for *me*?' replied the Protector.—'Let him, Ireton, be safely reconducted home. If I send for you, fail not to come. Enough.' Then rising feebly from his chair, he returned into his bed-chamber, commanding to be left alone. The four coadjutors slipped silently through the opposite door, by their countenances shewing the subject had been rather touching.

Doctor Scot's safe return home again restored joy to his peaceful dwelling. Late in the evening the great Mr. Bare-bones visited the Doctor, much disguised, bearing his introductory dark lanthorn, an emblem of the times! attending in the character of Oliver's

jackall, or purveyor of intelligence.— Threats, rewards, abuse, cajolling, proved insufficient; Doctor Scot would not impeach the author of his intelligence relating to the Battleridge discovery.

Being confined to his house, lest a second summons from the Protector should arrive, Sir Ralph Vesey's friends held their meetings there, delivering the Doctor's sentiments to the council who sat upon this affair; which being much approved, in consequence of the Doctor's advice, Lord Southampton sent a pressing invitation to Sir Ralph and Lady Vesey to come to him.— Wishing to spare them, by absence, the anxiety which must necessarily attend the ensuing official search at Aumerl, Sir Thomas Hazzlerig, with a company of his men, having a search-



warrant from the Secretary, to be enforced at Aumerl, with two eminent lawyers, charged with the recovered deed of Battleridge, held themselves ready to set forward at a short notice; when Sir Thomas being seized with a fever, the enquiry was postponed.

CHAP. IX.

**DURING** this delay Doctor Scot was summoned late one evening to come out upon the Common, where he saw a second muffled person, with a dark lanthorn.

‘My poor wife!’ said he to himself, concluding upon an immediate seizure. A tall stiff man, whom, upon recollection, the Doctor assuredly thought was the Protector, with extended hand, gave him a small but heavy parcel, said not one word, and feebly walked off. The deposit proved to be a large sum of money, with a note in these words:

“The Lord Protector has no further commands for you: accept this gift, and pay it in your prayers that his life may be lengthened.”

The Doctor was much affected: it afforded ample scope for moral reflection, excited true compassion, and the more, as holy hope was in a manner banished by the atrocity of past crimes in the poor despairing, dismayed petitioner.

Thus liberated, Sir Thomas Hazzlerig being recovered, Doctor Scot was sent forward to Battleridge, to prepare for the corps, who were shortly to rendezvous there. Upon his journey he met, as has been noticed, Sir Ralph and Lady Vesey coming to town; but persevered in silence to them relative to the behest he was sent upon. His orders were, to tell Captain Bridgman,

who was left to guard the Castle, Sir Thomas's commands for his being ready to join him at a moment's notice. All the occurrences the Doctor heard were, that frequent enquiries had reached Battleridge from Aumerl, whether Mr. Vesey had not been there? From whence the Doctor drew heavy surmises that Obadiah was gone off, and probably had taken Miss Vesey with him.

Walking, the day after his journey, with Captain Bridgman, about two miles from the Castle, the Doctor was much surprised by the passing by of two men, the one a black a-moor; and both in black habiliments, riding very furiously, attended by a post boy, who stopped and asked if they were in the right road to Battleridge? The gentlemen, full of conjecture, returned back.

'They will fare but ill,' said the Doctor, 'Mr. Worldridge is gone with Sir Ralph, and poor Marmaduke is confined by the gout.'

The stables of the Castle were still unfurnished; for the soldiers horses were purposely sent away; the post-boy therefore soon returned, driving his jaded cavalry, and raving at their unmerciful riders; nor could any intelligence be gained from him relating to his late customers, save that they came early to his master's post-office, paid greatly for all they had; the one seemed mad, and the other talked outlandish.

Upon the gentlemen's return to the Castle, they saw the young gentleman, as he appeared to be, convulsed and dreadfully frantic in the hall, sur-

rounded by the Captain's soldiers, the black-boy kneeling by him, and uttering an undescribable howl. Doctor Scot immediately ordered the poor sufferer into a bedchamber apartment, within the hall, sending directly for medical assistance.

The Serjeant acquainted him, that, upon seeing strangers coming, he met them at the hall-door; that the poor gentleman could only utter, 'Sir Ralph Vesey!' before he fell into that dreadful agony, in which he still remained; and that it was impossible to understand the black-boy, who would not stir an inch from 'dear Massa,' as he called the stranger.

At length, by much coaxing and gentleness, Doctor Scot prevailed on the black servant to hold converse,

such as it was, with him to this effect :

‘ Who is your master ? what is his name ? where does he live ? ’

‘ Massa is Massa : good, best in my country : come from cold, ver cold (shrugging up his shoulders) water, little canoes, high trees, like my country—one two drooms—one pantry—(Massa Pantry) come alon—come in horse canoe,’ pointing to the road; from whence the Doctor inferred more of the family were coming.

‘ Well, and what does Massa Pantry call you, and call your Massa ? ’ ‘ Call me Sancho, call Massa Mila.’

This was all that could be collected from Sancho, and did not even suggest a ray of discovery relative to the master. The medical people, on viewing the poor insane sufferer, would hardly admit a ray of hope : youth

might befriend him; but the fits of long stupor which succeeded the dreadful ravings were, as they observed, fatal symptoms. Eight and forty hours elapsed without the least amendment.

The Doctor, the physician, and Captain Bridgman, were then recalled by the serjeant from their garden stroll; a very magnificent chariot and six, with attendants, being arrived, with a fine looking old man, who could not utter one word through grief at seeing the young gentleman in so shocking a situation. The gentlemen, on entering the sick room, heard the old man, nearly distracted, cry, 'Why was I spared thus to see the end of this noble family?'

Perceiving the gentlemen, he bowed low; suffused in inundating tears, his speech failed for some moments; at



length, in the broadest Scotch dialect, he said, 'All, I see, is over! I am old and childish, as these tears show. Pardon me, I and my forefathers have served this noble family since the days of Duncan Canmore; and this, this is the last of them, and the best, though all were good!'

Upon the physician assuring this honest domestic, as he appeared to be, that hope was not entirely extinguished, he retired into an adjacent room, and thus prepared to satisfy the hearers' curiosity:—

'My dear, dear master is the Earl of Staffa!'

'Of Staffa!' said Doctor Scot, who instantaneously thought this young man must be the person once so dear to Miss Vesey—'Why, I thought he was a very old man?'

‘Gone! gone!’ said the stranger—  
‘Gone too is his eldest son, Lord Clan-  
rig!’

Little more passed; but the Doctor, in the evening, courting the private ear of Mr. Macpherson (for that was the stranger’s name) collected the following particulars:—

‘Lord Staffa,’ said the worthy domestic, ‘had only two children, Lord Clanrig, and this Master Donald, as they used to call him. His Lordship was a good man, only loved money and grandeur too well. Never were two finer gentlemen, or two so loving to each other, as our young Lords!—When my old Lord came from visiting the South, about three years ago, Master Donald having been with him, he was sent forthwith abroad. Lord Clanrig had whispered me that his bro-

ther was soon to marry some great young lady, who then lived, as I take it, in this house.

‘ No more was heard of Donald for about two years; and poor Lord Clanrig growing very melancholy, I asked what ailed him? “ My dear brother,” said he, “ is sent I know not where: my father won’t say, lest I should write to him, and he should come back, and marry a young lady he dearly loves, whose fortune is gone.”

‘ My young Lord never held up his head, and was for ever talking of Master Donald. At length, about seven months past, my old Lord had an apoplectic fit; and was so long in recovering, that we thought he would die: and being much softened and frightened with the thoughts of dying, his eldest son did prevail on him to write,

and recall his younger son, then in Newfoundland, as appeared. He was ordered to put in at a port in the Hebrides; and our two Lords removed near the shore there, to an old castle of Lord Staffa's; and the answer they gave was, that Master Donald was coming. Merciful! how impatient Lord Clanrig grew! He lived upon the strand, peeping through his spy-glass.

‘One of our boobies, on a sad stormy night, after my Lord was gone to bed, must needs tell him that a ship was wrecked since evening on a neighbouring island. “My brother! my brother!” said he; and not minding me, ordered out his boat and men: and, poor souls! within two hours, the storm raged so that they went to the bottom!—I cannot talk about it. The news threw his father into a second

fit, and he died the following day. The wrecked ship was from Norway.

‘ In about three weeks afterwards our dear Lord did return—return to such grief as you cannot believe; and above all, that he could not find his dear brother’s body: so he fell very ill, and seemed much troubled in mind, and more has he been so since he had some Southern gentlemen with him, who told him, he said, sad news. The next day he ordered his grooms and horses to attend him to the South. Being very lame, from a slip out of the ship, I did prevail on him to come in his carriage, and carry me with him, to take care of him.

‘ Passing late through a wood near unto Penrith, we heard dreadful cries; and the horsemen, with my Lord, going into the thick part of the wood, found

one man on the ground, and another beating him unmercifully. They rescued one, and secured the other; conveying both to an inn at Penrith. The surgeon declared the wounded man would not live many hours, being so cruelly beaten about his head that he was speechless. The Justice could get little out of the other, a sulky, desperate fellow; but a great charge of money and jewels being found upon him, by our evidence he was committed to prison. It did one good to see how humane our Lord was to the poor half-killed man; and how active against the other!

‘ In the midst of all this lubber comes in a fat, talking kind of gentleman, to whom all seemed to pay court, he was here, there, and every where, asking me a world of questions about

who my Lord was, and, a little uncivilly methought, rushed into his room. They were shut up a long time together.

‘ Archy, our groom, soon after came to me from my Lord, ordering me to bed, as it was late, that I might be ready early next morn: so, fool as I was, to bed I went. This order was only sent to get me out of his way, for my Lord set out only with black Sancho, a negro he brought home with him, on post-horses, the middle of the night; commanding Archy and me to follow him here, and we have ever since been coming, the roads were so bad, and our horses and carriage so heavy.

‘ I heard, before I left Penrith, that the poor wounded man lay in the most shocking agonies of death, one eye being beat in, his jaw broke, and skull

fractured. Ah! that we never had met these accursed fellows! then had my poor dear Lord come quietly on: that he did not, I cannot guess, and I had not seen the joy of my eyes in such a deplorable condition.'

Mr. Macpherson's account raised various conjectures in the mind of Dr. Scot. Having heard Mr. Weston was just returned from a few days ramble from home, the Doctor directly walked to Broomfield, the house being not a mile from Battleridge, communicating there all recent events. Mr. Weston was of the Doctor's opinion, that if Obadiah and O'Connor were gone off as surmised, they might be the identical people Lord Staffa had met in the wood; and assured by Mr. Weston that Lawyer Jephson lived only a few miles from Penrith, his inordinate cu-



riosity or chance had brought him to that place; and that he might have suggested intelligence of the Vesey family and of the young Lady's loss, which stimulated the poor young Lord's hurrying and fatal journey.

At best, all was dubious, all conjecture. During the extension of this doubtful conversation, a messenger arrives from Battleridge, announcing Captain Bridgman's being gone, at a few minutes notice, with three of his soldiers, to meet his Colonel on Coalheath Common, a few miles distant from Aumerl.

This sudden intelligence greatly agitated even Doctor Scot. 'Ah!' cried he, 'what hours of suspense await me! The Almighty directs all for the best! Then Sir Thomas Hazzlerig is come,

and by this time Miss Vesey may be delivered—may not be found at Au-merl, but rather some paramour of revengeful O'Connor's, that has been there immured. Dear Sir, and Madam,' continued the Doctor, 'and good Miss Jemimah, the bosom friend of poor Miss Vesey, (for Mrs. and Miss Weston were just entered the parlour) advise me how to act. To bring the poor prisoner, should it be Miss Vesey, to Battleridge, during Lord Staffa's dangerous state, might drive the much hurried Lady to distraction; for his being there could not be secreted.'

'My dear, dear, Nora,' cried the weeping Miss Weston, 'Oh! Sir and Madam, let her come to us!'

'By all means,' said Mr. Weston: 'I will go directly and ride about

Aumerl, hoping to gain intelligence; and do you, sweetheart, (the common appellation of wives in those days) and you, Jemimah, be ready to follow in the coach, if sent for.'

The plan being thus settled, Doctor Scot returned to his nursery at Battlebridge, counting the tardy moments of lingering suspense.

When Sir Thomas Hazzlerig and his military attendance reached Aumerl, they perceived that the barricado prevailed: no admittance, no answer to any demand for entrance. At length a surly porter peeped over the battlements of the low tower, which formed his lodge.

'Go,' said Sir Thomas pretty warmly, 'go tell your Lord that Sir Thomas Hazzlerig bears to his Lordship the Lord Protector's commands: admit us

speedily, or I will batter down your gates.'

Lord Aumerl had been thrown into inexpressible terror about an hour before Sir Thomas's arrival, by learning from a servant, who by chance was at a neighbouring village where the soldiers halted, that they were marching to Aumerl, which he had collected from enquiries they made relative to the road thither. Debilitated as my Lord was by age, infirmities, and a late very touching deprivation, his resolution and fortitude, but not his cunning, forsook him. The only way of hope he had was from the likelihood that the Protector might have sent to require his relinquishment of Battleridge. 'That,' said he to himself, 'I shall do graciously, and, if possible, receive Hazzle-

rig with an open, unreserved, untrifled look.'

The porter vehemently opposed admitting the military within the Castle-yard. Sir Thomas was peremptory, and ordering his soldiers to their proper stations, he proceeded into the great hall. Not an attendant was visible, most of the servants having crept into closets and presses. As himself and two officers further advanced, they were met by a jolly woman, whose countenance shone with the most lively joy.

'Honest Deborah, on my life,' said Sir Thomas.

'Yes, your Highness, and I am so glad you are come to set my poor Lord Scaleby and the Lady free, and would O'Connor and his Honour Vesey were

not gone off, that they might meet their due !'

'Gone! where? when?'

'Why, your Highness, they went off, as we suppose, in the night, last week; and, between you and I, robbed my old Lord of a world of money, as I hears from Madam Prudence, our house-keeper. She is as distracted about that varmint O'Connor, as my Lord is about losing Mr. Obadiah.'

'Shew me to your Lord, Deborah, and bid the house-keeper, at her peril, deliver up all her keys to these gentlemen. Captain Bridgman, place her under a safe guard.'

'Lord love your Highness, do not hurt her,' replied Deborah, 'she is a kind woman; poor soul, she has locked herself in that room.'

The soldiers directly forced the door, finding Prudence in a swoon on the floor. 'Search for all her keys, Mrs. Deborah,' said Captain Bridgman, 'then take proper means to recover her, assuring her she shall not be ill-used.'

Lord Aumerl was too weak and tremulous to rise at Sir Thomas's entrance, extending his hand, and putting on a kind of joviality, little suitable to his cold manner and stiff address, 'My old boy, Hazzlerig!' cries he, 'my heart leapeth forward to meet thee.'

'My Lord,' was Sir Thomas's reply, turning aside his offered hand, 'this is no season for grimace or subterfuge: I bear you here a search warrant from the Secretary, to be put in force immediately. This is a second warrant for apprehending your son Obadiah, and his servant O'Connor: they stand

charged for heinous offences; your name, as an accomplice, through the intercession of your injured nephew, Vesey, and from the Lord Protector's clemency, is omitted in the black and dismal prelude to justice. Justice, my Lord, stalks into this guilty house, and will pervade every apartment.'

'My nephew Vesey!' replied the Earl, 'so far from withholding his right, I will this moment joyfully relinquish Battleridge to the worthy man.'

'No prevarication, my Lord,' replied Sir Thomas; 'the Battleridge business is the last I am commanded to touch upon—where is your son?'

'My son, my Benoni, is, I warrant, gone forth a journeying among some elect friends; youth communicates not freely with age, and sometimes doeth



things unseemly, unknown, and unapproved by elders'

' My Lord, add not the meanness of lying to your other crimes; you know Obadiah, after robbing you, is gone off, gone, lest the seizure of Miss Vesey be proved on him. Oh! that you may be cleared of being an accessory! but never, never can your shameful, unnatural, cruel behaviour towards your eldest son, Lord Scaleby, be sponged off! I would pity your age, and respect you from your rank, if I could; you shall be treated leniently. Here, Captain Bridgman, call some of my Lord's servants to attend him, he seems much struck; and do you and two centinels be stationed at his door.'

As Sir Thomas Hazzlerig quitted the room, he heard my Lord inarticu-

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lately say, 'Oh Absalom, my son! my son! would I could die for thee, my son Absalom!' which was probably uttered to excite compassion.

'Here, your Highness,' said Deborah, who was waiting with the keys at the door, '-here are the keys of every thing: Madam Prudence swears the lady is alive, and well; I will shew you her room.'

Sir Thomas was greatly affected; the tender man prevailed over the rough soldier. 'Be very gentle, Deborah,' said he, 'I will wait just by; ask her if she is Miss Vesey; and say that Sir Thomas Hazzlerig is sent by her father to set her at liberty.'

Deborah unbolted the outward door, and knocking at the inner door, the bolts gave way, the chained door par-

tially opened, and a sweet face appeared.

‘A stranger,’ said the lady, ‘I never talk to strangers; where is my old friend?’

‘Too ill to come up stairs, Miss.’

The door immediately closed, and the bolts were drawn.

‘Do ye, blessed sweet lady,’ continued Deborah, ‘say if you bee’nt one Miss Vesey? Do ye, for love of Heaven; none but friends are near, your enemies be all conquered.’

‘A likely story,’ answered the voice; ‘I have been too ill used to be caught again, and I will answer no one but the woman I am used to.’

‘La! my Lady, the soldiers have got she locked up; the yard and house are full of them, and here is Sir Thomas

Hazzlerig, as it were, close to your door, praying you to tell your name.'

'And where is Mr. Obadiah and that other dreadful man?'

'Gone off, after robbing the house.'

'Where is the old Lord?'

'Dying, as I think, among the soldiers.'

'Very improbable, surely! I shall answer no more questions: Providence has mercifully secured me, by finding this chain, and I will never quit the certain for the questionable.' She replied no further.

Sir Thomas, greatly agitated, approached the door. 'Dearest Miss Vesey,' said he, 'for I am sure it is your sweet voice, deign to admit your father's oldest friend, Hazzlerig, sent hither with a company of soldiers, by the Lord Protector, to liberate you,

and apprehend your persecutors; they are all safe. It is to this good woman whom you just now saw we owe the intelligence of your confinement; your quondam attendant shall appear, if required; she is in some of my soldiers' hands.'

Through the still unopened door Miss Vesey replied: 'I know not your voice; you may be an agent of Obadiah's, and should I again half open my door, as usual, it might be more easily forced. I prefer starving to the dreadful alternative of falling into Obadiah's hands. Your story is not well planned: why, if living, comes not a parent to deliver and re-assure his distressed child? I will not believe a word of this fabricated story.'

Sir Thomas, sending Deborah down, to bring up Prudence, thinking Miss

Vesey might credit her relation, thus went on : ' Sweetest lady, your father, mother, brother, are all well, and with Lord Southampton in London; gone there upon the business of recovering the Battleridge estate, which will this day be accomplished. They know nothing of my present situation; Doctor Scot thought it best to spare them this anxiety, till your really being found here was ascertained. Obadiah and O'Connor have made their escape; but the justice which redeems you will pursue them.'

She was heard to cry violently; then replied : ' Ah me! the little hope I had formed is all fallen ! your story, Sir, is not perfectly formed. I am confident my father knows not any Doctor Scot.'

Indeed he does; to him is owing the



recovery, the marvellous recovery of the lost deed : he is now at the head of affairs at Battleridge, and within a few hours I hope to introduce the best of young ladies to that best of men.'

She replied not; but when the half-dead Prudence was brought up, and in sobbing accents confirmed every circumstance just related, after passing examination and cross examination, adroitly suggested by the lady,— 'Well,' cried she, 'let the gentleman and all retire to the further end of the gallery; I will then peep out; we shall thereby be satisfied of each other's identity.'

The bolts gave way; the trembling prisoner's face was visible. 'It is Miss Vesey!' 'It is Sir Thomas Hazzlerig!' cried each at the same moment. 'Gracious Heaven!' said she, 'and do I

once again behold a friend!' That friend could not reply. She held her hand through the half-opened door: he kissed it most fervently.

'Good Sir Thomas,' said the lady, 'you are too much affected, and so am I; leave me for half an hour to reflect on what I ought to do, and to meditate on your friendship.'

She burst into tears; again drew the bolt, and the entrance was impervious. Sir Thomas called for wine and refreshment, bidding Deborah not let any of his men appear, to see him in his womanish mood. Prudence, with reassurances of mercy, was again returned into military jurisdiction. Sir Thomas, renovated by Deborah's collation, was moving downward.

'Stop, your Highness,' said she, unlocking a door, 'see here a further

proof of our Lord's piety. Lord Scaleby, Lord Noddy, where be'st? Poor soul, thou hast heard our noise, and art afraid of its being O'Connor, so has quite covered thee, dear wretch, in the straw! It is only Deb, my Lord, and a good gentleman, come to take me and thee away in a coach from this wicked house.'

The straw moved, and a face, to be likened only to Swift's imaginary Yahoos, peeped up, and as instantly disappeared with a dreadful howl, immersing itself in the straw from terror at seeing a stranger.

Sir Thomas started, and appeared aghast. 'My God,' cried he, 'what a spectacle! That this horrid being, once the companion of my youth, the sought-for companion of every social

lively company, should be thus, and so shockingly disfigured!' Passion succeeding, Sir Thomas stamped thro' rage, and dealt in the most tremendous execrations.

This did not mend poor Lord Scaleby's terrors, he became convulsed, and fell into a dreadful fit. Sir Thomas, hiding his eyes, retired, and went into the garden. Assistance being called in, Lord Scaleby soon recovered; and the fit had entirely and happily obliterated the little recollection he had. Deborah (inured to pacify him) assuring him O'Connor and Obadiah were gone, was leading him down stairs, when Sir Thomas met them. Again terror appeared in this poor Lord; but directing his eye to the military dresses of the soldiers, for he was much struck

by finery, admiration happily took place.

‘Open that door,’ said Sir Thomas to Captain Bridgman, ‘and let us shew this vile old Earl to what a state he has reduced his elder son.’ Lord Scaleby’s terrors returned on the sight of his father. ‘Take him away, Deborah,’ said Sir Thomas, ‘let his goat’s beard be shaved, his talon nails cut, his rags changed, for another night he shall not stay in this house.’

Lord Aumerl had turned away, and was hiding his eyes, when Sir Thomas violently shaking him, cried, ‘Rouse, thou abominable old man, rouse to reflection and sore repentance, or woe be to thee everlastingly! I want words to speak my rage; thou art below every thing;’ and so saying, he left the room with a frantic aspect.

After endeavouring to compose himself, onwards he moved toward Miss Vesey's prison. It opened partially as before. 'Will you not admit me?' said Sir Thomas.

'Think me not, Sir,' replied the lady, 'suspicious, deranged, or ungrateful; if you insist upon it, you shall have admittance, for I owe such a friend implicit obedience: but, Sir, when chance, Providence rather, led me to discover this securing chain, I mentally resolved never to unloose it till I could admit my father. That cannot be. Consider, dear Sir Thomas, the delicacy of my situation; confined near ten weeks, if I mistake not, in a house so abandoned, my character, even among the most candid, will ever be questionable. I can thankfully say no personal insult has been offered

me, nor have I once since my first seizure seen the wretched Obadiah. These facts the world will not easily credit. Could I again emerge into life, with how much better grace should I be received if taken immediately under the protection of Mrs. Weston's most respectable character; and would she condescend to fetch me from hence, how far more reputable would it be for me than stepping forth at first among kept-mistresses, and a house filled with soldiers, though even commanded by you!

'My dear young lady,' replied Sir Thomas, 'how I revere your wisdom, and admire your delicacy. We rough soldiers think not of these proprieties; though, with all mankind, we must admire such truly feminine refinement. It shall be so. I doubt not of

Mrs. Weston's joyful compliance. A messenger now waits to convey the happy assurance of your safety to Southampton-house, and shall call at Broomfield in his way, also speeding this pleasant intelligence to Doctor Scot, at Battleridge. You will take some nourishment, and seek composure after such hurrying events.' She assented; and again drew her bolts.

After the messenger was gone, assembling the two lawyers who had accompanied Sir Thomas, they formed themselves into something like a judicial quorum, and the terrified Prudence was summoned to render an account of all she knew of Miss Vesey's seizure; which she did, after assurances of mercy, pretty much in these words :

' Being in bed one night in my Lord's room, for since his illness I have



slept there——’ ‘Yes, yes,’ said Sir Thomas, ‘curse him for canting as he does about his Abishag! Go on, woman.’ ‘I was awakened by his Honour, Mr. Vesey, and his man servant, and bid to follow them. “Go,” said O’Connor, “turn Harry Smith out of the chained chamber, prepare a bed there, for his Honour has brought home a girl; and, do you mark me, if you flinch, or tell a word of this to any one, I will rip you up, and bury you under the dog-kennel dung-hill.”

‘Alack! I believed him, and your Worship knows that life is sweet. When the room was ready O’Connor met me, and gave me the key of the armory underneath the chained chamber. “She’s there,” said he, “and if she goes quietly up with you, we will not come near her.”

‘La! how I was struck to see so beautiful and sweet a lady as she appeared to be, and my heart smote me sorely; but, thinks I, servants must obey. I marvelled to see her so calm; when I told her the message she nodded, asked no questions, and immediately followed me. When we got into the dismal room, she rather started.’

“Leave me a light,” said she, “and retire; I see a bolt—how fortunate!” She directly drew it; and then calling to me, said, “Woman, go tell your wicked employers I have secreted under my gown, from the armory, a two edged dagger, and I will plunge it into the first man who dares to enter this chamber; for I neither fear killing or being killed in self-defence.”

‘Sure never was such an awful lady! When I told her message, Mr. Vesey

seemed as one astounded. "O'Connor," said he, "thou hast drawn me into a fine quandary; did I not tell thee, her haughtiness and contempt had converted my love into hatred? We may meet Haman's fate for this night's work."

"And did you not tell me," said O'Connor, "when we saw her by chance alone, how sweet revenge would be; and when I offered to carry her off, did you not promise me ten pounds for the job, and seem delighted with the contrivances I formed? But your Honour (Honour indeed!) is an errant coward, and have, nor ever had, a jot of the man about you." And they quarrelled, as they often did. I was ordered to shew the lady great respect, and to wait upon her with the best of every thing, but to answer no

questions. In troth she never put any to me; but always seemed so quiet, civil, and thankful, that I loved her dearly. She expressed herself right glad at having found a chain fitted to the door, which, in my hurry, I forgot to move, and which my Lord's grandfather used, when he slept there among his money, and said, never would she unloose it till safe deliverance was granted her.

'Mr. Vesey had not an easy moment after he got her; would not even go near her door, though he was advised so to do; he was afraid of his own shadow, and we were all locked in, like prisoners.'

'Did my old Lord know of this?' said Sir Thomas.

'Your Honour, how should a poor sarvant know?'

‘Remember the pinchers are here, woman,’ said one of the lawyers.

She resumed. ‘I believe his Lordship might have a smattering of the matter, after the lady came, having heard him once say to Mr. Vesey, “All you have to do in this accursed, unadvised business is to keep her close, or your lives will pay for it: so long as you live, son, never let her out.”’

‘Tell us all you know of Mr. Vesey and O’Connor’s escape,’ said a counsellor.

‘They had heard something, when O’Connor was sent to guard Battle-ridge-house, that mortally terrified his Honour, Vesey; something, I believe, about soldiers being sent there: he neither eat, drank, nor slept; and one night last week came into my Lord’s room, and waked us both, O’Connor

bid me lie still, and left his Honour holding a pistol to me; he then shook my Lord, who sleeps sound, and used words bad enough to frighten him; then forced away his keys, and took a world of treasure out of the strong-box; locked us both in, and, I suppose, went off directly. My Lord lay groaning and praying all night; bid me hold my tongue and say nothing of what had happened, if I had not a mind to hang O'Connor: so I did not, for I have always had a great *valley* for him, though I knew he was bad enough.

The examination thus ended, Sir Thomas's next business was to send Lord Scaleby and Deborah under Doctor Scot's protection. Though fear at the sight of every stranger prevailed strongly in Lord Scaleby, yet Deborah averred he knew something of what was

going forward; was highly delighted, and greatly admired his new dress. When in the coach his delight encreased, and as they drove through an old ball court, at Battleridge, he pointed, and cried, 'Ball, Jack Jephson!' which shewed his recollection of having played there in juvenile times with that honest lawyer. Doctor Scot received this heart-affecting deposit in a manner so gentle, that before night my Lord appeared quite reconciled to his new apartment; while good natured Deborah, in great delight, admired all he said and did, retailing his bon-mots to the Doctor.

The two impatient waiters, Mrs. and Miss Weston, were in readiness to attend the summons from Aumerl. At the first sound of their well-known

voices, the bolts, the chain gave way, and in a moment Miss Vesey and Miss Weston were encircled in each other's arms, in joy unutterable : Miss Vesey recollecting herself in a few moments, was on her knees before Mrs. Weston.

‘ This, dearest Madam,’ said she, ‘ is joy indeed ! so completely indulgent, so undoubtful on your part ; for, however far your friendship to my father and mother might carry you in the relief of their persecuted child, yet, in bringing with you your unquestionably all perfect daughter, thus to countenance a dubious reputation, trebles the obligation. Oh ! Madam, in the world's eye, I fear the glare of squint-eyed Suspicion ; but believe me, I have not, thanks be to Heaven ! been contaminated either in person or mind,



never have I once seen the fell Obadiah since hurried by him instantaneously into this horrid durance; nor have I spoken a moment in any society but my own wretched company.'

'Worthy Mrs. Weston said every thing to assure and comfort the poor sufferer. 'Let us hasten, my dear child,' said she, 'from this diabolical house; my coach waits.'

'Sir Thomas Hazzlerig,' said Miss Vesey, 'all thanks to you are insufficient. I have yet more favours to ask. For my sake, treat the woman gently, who has so long and humanely attended me; and have the goodness to advance to her, from me, a poor beggar in every thing, ten guineas. Remember Lord Aumerl's great age, probably he knew not of my seizure, being myself assured it was unpreme-

ditated. 'Take care of poor Lord Scaleby, he is a wretched object; the only person I ever have seen I must suppose was his Lordship; for once having the curiosity to loosen my chain, and look out into the gallery, I there beheld a terrifying Orangoutang appearance, and paid dearly in the article of terror for my curiosity.'

'Your commands, dear Miss Vesey, are in part fulfilled by this time, poor Lord Scaleby is safely lodged at Battleridge, and be assured the woman shall receive your reward, and be leniently treated. Come, my uncaged bird; give me leave to lead you into the regions of free air and liberty.'

So saying, Sir Thomas conducted the ladies towards Mrs. Weston's coach. There stood joyful Mr. Weston.

‘What have we here?’ said he: ‘another beautiful yet innocent Jane Shore, with dishevelled tresses—stoles of white and flowing raiment! Well, your penance is ended, and never was penance less merited. Get you all to Broomfield, and prepare a good supper for Sir Thomas, Doctor Scot, and your slave, and let joy be the word.’

Being in a very weak state, and having exerted herself too much, Miss Vesey sunk back in the coach, expressing her gratitude only in pressing her companions’ hands: they spoke not to her. As the coach drew near to Battleridge Castle, she often opened her eyes: and on the first view of its distant battlements, dropping on her knees, uttered this apostrophe:

‘Restored and venerable abode of

my forefathers ! again re-possessed by the best of possessors ! dear natal seat of my early happy years, do I once more behold thee !'

The unfinished sentence died away unexpressed, relevant tears succeeded; and when the coach stopped at Broomfield, Miss Vesey was taken out of the carriage seemingly lifeless, and conveyed directly to bed by her two most tender friends.

After the ladies left Aumerl, Sir Thomas having congregated the lawyers, Mr. Weston, and another neighbouring gentleman, together, they passed into the Earl's room, and there found him an object of undeserved pity: he evidently, but unsuccessfully, endeavoured to keep up his dignity, putting on a sullen haughty aspect.

'We have done much business, Lord

Aumerl,' said Sir Thomas. ' We began the evacuation of this guilty house, by sending your much abused eldest son and injured niece into more parental quarters. Nay, my Lord, make no defence, the Lord Protector, through me, expects only implicit obedience; no altercation, no palliatives; the wretched cause admits of none. The gentlemen of the long robe are commissioned by the first person in the law to read to your Lordship the original deed of conveyance, granted to your late brother by the Earl, your father, of the Battleridge estates; you are required to sign a relinquishment of all and every claim upon Sir Ralph Vesey. These gentlemen are to witness your resignation, and also to assist the Sergeant and Counsellor in selecting the deeds of all your own estates, sending

such deeds into Chancery, lest your eldest son should be as much injured in pecuniaries as he has been in person.'

Tears then burst from the tremulous old man. 'Oh! had I not been bereft of thee, my son Obadiah, I had, notwithstanding this sore visitation, not been bereft! Only shew mercy to that, my balm of Gilead, and then let my grey hairs go down with sorrow to the grave!'

'Obadiah, when apprehended,' replied Sir Thomas, 'will be tried fairly by the laws of his country; and your Lordship may be thankful that you are to be confined only to your house, near Whitehall, where I am ordered to send your Lordship, under a proper guard, to morrow. Come, my Lord, to business?'

The deed was read. The Proteus-

like Lord immediately changed into the easy and admissible mood: 'Thanks to the Lord,' said he, 'that I die not possessed of another's lands! my nephew has been unwittingly deprived by me: I will render twofold, if required. Battleridge is not the original seat of Aumerl, it was added to us by marriage with the Brandons and Visiponts, and hence in their right we quarter the——'

'No more of garrulity or of family narrative,' continued Sir Thomas, 'from a man who has disgraced his ancestors. To business, my Lord, I say?'

The relinquishment was signed, the deeds of my Lord's estates packed in trunks, sealed by the gentlemen. My Lord appeared unwilling to produce his signet. 'My Lord,' said the Counselor, 'you must place your signet here.'

‘Peradventure I have mislaid it.’

‘Oh,’ says Sir Thomas, ‘call Abishag, alias Madam Prudence, she knows where to find every thing belonging to her Lord.’

Prudence deposed, that his Honour, Mr. Obadiah, took the gold signet, with sundry valuables, from his father’s strong-box.

‘Who admires not,’ said Sir Thomas, ‘my Lord’s tender delicacy to one of his sons? May this supererogatory work sponge off somewhat of the cruelty heaped on the other! Mrs. Prudence, in respect of your Lord’s great age and infirmities, you are suffered to accompany him; and from your proper behaviour to Miss Vesey, may, perhaps, be favoured, in not being concerned or considered as an accomplice in these late infernal machinations. Captain



Bridgman, be ready with your men, as ordered early to-morrow, to follow Lord Aumerl's coach. You are directed not to hurry his Lordship on the road, beyond his strength or inclination; you are to pay him the respect due to his rank; and when you have safely lodged him in his London house, you are forthwith to notice his arrival to the Secretary, and not depart thence without his orders. Come, gentlemen, leave my Lord to prepare for his journey. From this moment, Lord Aumerl, begin preparation for that long and questionable journey, which, by the course of years, without the anticipation of your many infirmities, must early await your Lordship.'

Thus saying, without waiting reply,

the gentlemen left the room. The friendly joy that would have prevailed in the evening society at Broomfield, formed by Mr. Weston, Sir Thomas Hazzlerig, and Dr. Scot, was chastised by the fear that poor Miss Vesey's sufferings were not ended. Dr. Scot reported Lord Staffa's remaining just in the same melancholy state; that he was not worse was the physician's negative comfort.

Having had the blessing of some refreshing sleep, Miss Vesey arose to thankfulness and joy; was early at her pen, wishing to transmit by Sir Thomas Hazzlerig a full account of her late melancholy adventures to Sir Ralph and Lady Vesey.

The exordium of this letter was such as might be expected from a well-informed mind, replete with filial love

and duty : elaborate sentiment had not stood forth in those days, parade and flowery language were unknown : children (good children) acted rather than professed duty and respect ; seeking not the flimsy sententious language of latter times.

Of her seizure by Mr. Vesey she thus, in her letter, speaks : “ The uncommon mildness of that unlucky evening I strayed from home kept me in my favourite haunt, the Grotto, till the moon rose high. Preparing to return, two men passed me on horse-back ; one instantly turned and stopped me, uttering to the other a variety of oaths against his seeming fearfulness, and saying, “ Now was his time.” “ Hold my horse,” said he, “ and I will secure her.” My faint and fearful screams were soon impeded, by a

gag being put in my mouth; they hurried me into the wood, beyond your park, tied me to a tree, and at a distance entered into a long altercation, from which dreadful swearing often reached my ears. I committed myself earnestly to Providence, and from it received undescribable support and resolution; nor did tears escape me, save when I thought of my parents.

‘ Almost from the first seizure, I was morally sure these ruffians were Obadiah and O’Connor; but my suspicion of their policy taught me, even when ungagged, not to notice. Not a word did they say to me till a rough and feigned voice cried, “Be manageable, and you shall be honourably treated.” What could I do but submit?

‘ Placed on one of their horses, I

was conducted by these slow-paced men to about the distance, as I thought, of Aumerl. It was late; the moon was sunk. I heard them unlock an heavy door; was taken off my horse, and led over grass to a long paved walk; another door unlocked, I was carried up a winding stair-case: a third door was opened, I saw by the dark lantern (they had contrived I know not how to light) nothing but armour. My spirit was subdued. I tried to scream, and was ready to faint. Frightened, as I suppose, my persecutors left me, with the lantern placed on a coffer. Having unbound me before they went away, I was refreshed; and looking round, recollected the great armory-room at Aumerl; which in childhood had ever been an object of my fear. A woman, seemingly just risen from bed, entered,

with water and drops; she started and blessed herself.

“Madam, be easy,” said she, “you shall have the best of usage; and if you will quietly follow me up into a bed-chamber, when ready, as I hope to be saved hereafter, you shall see no one but me this night.”

I nodded assent. Talking, promising, threatening, or engaging her humanity on my side, I knew would not avail. She was going. “Leave me not in the dark?” said I. She obeyed. Now, thought I, is my time for securing a weapon of defence, and instantly I selected a short two edged dagger, carefully secreting it under my gown.

She soon returned: I followed her up into a dismal room; but when I saw its inner bolts, a ray of comfort

beamed on my distressed mind. The woman was all civility, full of liberal offers for my refreshment: accepting nothing but the candle, she retired. I drew my bolts, and through the door boasted to my keeper of my dagger, and courageous determination of using it, should any man enter that chamber. Oh! what a dismaying chamber it was! an old uncurtained bed, made of black ebony, and carved with frightful faces! one chair, an old table, and only a single small window, out of my reach, barricaded with transverse bars! the light was hardly admissible: a closet too; I longed, yet dreaded to open it; but brandishing my dagger, I ventured. Nothing saw I there but lumber, old iron, and a long chain—a chain, thought I, perhaps to bind me! That moment I again tried

my bolt, and seeing two strong hooks on the door-frame, bethought me I might try to hitch on them the chain for further security. Judge of my satisfaction when I found it appertained to those hooks. Such sudden joy tranquilizing all fear, for that night, worn with fatigue, I threw myself on the bed, and slept quietly several hours. With what horrid sensations did I awake, attended with that depressive feeling one experiences after a first sleep allowed us upon losing a dear friend! Reason soon stepped in, and gratitude to Heaven, that my case was not more helpless, more desperate, becalmed my mind; and I determined to practise the fortitude ever conspicuous in noble minds, and which I had always, like you, my dear mother, so greatly venerated.



‘ The woman was early at my door, offering me every thing to refresh, comfort, and amuse me. Upon seeing me chained in, surprize threw her off her guard. “Mercy !” cried she, “that O’Connor should forget to tell me to remove the chain !”

“ O’Connor !” said I; “ then I am at Aumerl, and, doubtless, in the house of an uncle, of Lord Aumerl’s piety, need not fear insult ?”

‘ The woman was much agitated. “ My life,” said she, “ may pay for this blabbing. Dear lady, you are only brought hither for your good; his Honour Vesey loves the very ground you tread upon, and by thus securing you, hopes to wheedle you to marry him forthwith.”

“ That,” said I, “ never, never will I do. Let us know each other’s minds.

Give my humble duty to the Earl, and say, if he will release me, my father will only look upon this seizure as a young man's frolic; but do not promise my marriage with his son; for I would prefer starving in this dungeon, or living in it for many years, to being united with such a man. Nor will I ever hold a moment's converse with him or his vile servant. Bid them beware of my fixed resolution as to using my dagger; they may shoot me through the wainscot, it is an easy death, and I fear it not. Tell them I never will unloose this providential chain, but to a parent or a friend. If I am furnished with the things so kindly offered me by you, I will receive them thankfully; you shall find me patient and contented, for I can,

and will endure." She blessed herself and retired.

' I will not trouble you, my dearest parents, with the recital of the various negotiations carried on by our female Plenipo between the gentleman and myself, the fulsome fondness retailed from Obadiah, and the cringing offers rendered me by my Lord. I was inflexible as to opening my door; they equally so, from fear, doubtless, as to my request of acquainting you with my confinement. Obadiah once sent me a strange letter, written to you, desiring me to copy it. This gave way to much negotiation. At length we compromised the matter. I wrote you a letter (probably never received) wherein, though obliged to mislead you as to the place I was then in, yet I thought the assurance of my being

living would sanctify that deception. Supplied with books, luckily I had my everlasting piece of point-work in my work-bag, with clean linen. Offered every dainty, I spent my time far less dreadful than could be expected; living chiefly by candle-light, the room being almost rayless.

‘ I had only one adventure, which, though terrific at the time, I find led to my discovery, and carries with it a fine moral relative to wicked people often being discovered by their own wickedness.

‘ One day, when I knew all the family were at dinner, curiosity led me to loosen my chain and peep out in the long gallery,—and there did I see such a horrid appearance as quite absorbed me in terror! it was poor Lord Scaleby, as I since collect, who was

also just emerged from his neighbouring cell, and come out for fresh air. "Poor pretty lady!" he called me. I instantly re-sought my fortification, and for many nights and days could not conquer the needless terror I had of that poor harmless being. As I seldom advanced any thing to my goaler, and did not chuse she should know I had opened my door, I forbore speaking of Lord Scaleby to her.

'And now, dear and honoured parents, what have I to wish for, but your's and my beloved brother Rafey's return? I am well; but having been so long debarred from usual exercise, you will see me pale and altered. The great advantage I shall deduce from late misfortunes will be, that from a questionable character no more offers of marriage will be suggested. Peace

and Battleridge be my lot! There, meliorated by time, my grief will be tranquilized, and I shall even with pleasure reflect upon what my dear Donald Murray was, and would have been to me, had not cruel man dissolved our intended union, in consequence of which I am sure he is no more.'

The joyful intelligence of Miss Vesey's safety being related precipitately to Lady Vesey, she was too much affected to return home directly; but an early day was named. Miss Vesey and Doctor Scot, from a congeniality of disposition, greatly delighted in each other's society: she grew cheerful, and often rallied him on his incivility, in not admitting her offered visits to him at Battleridge, which required all his address to avoid.

‘The house was under thorough cleansing,’ he said, ‘and full of workmen replacing the torn down furniture, preparative to the family’s return. Even Nora’s friend, Jemimah, adopted his opinion, and would not join in a clandestine visit with her friend to Battlebridge. Strange Miss Vesey thought this denial. Fears suggesting that her father, mother, or brother, might be returned ill, and their illness kept from her, she privately determined to inspect if this was true. Accordingly, before six the next morning she slipped down stairs unnoticed, and pursuing the well known grassy path over two meadows, followed the daily workmen in at the great portal which led to the hall. Here she sat down in her old favourite chair, deeply ruminating on her hopes and fears. A man in black, one of

Lord Staffa's attendants, passing by her, bowed, started, and entered a bed-chamber that led out of the hall.

'So it is,' said she to herself, 'one of my parents, at least, is dead, and that is a new servant in mourning.'

The servant, with another clad in like sables, came directly out of the chamber, and both looking earnestly at her, ascended the great stair-case. They were going to tell Doctor Scot of a lady's arrival. She had not power to speak; but no sooner were they out of sight, than rousing herself, she cried, 'I will know the worst, and Heaven be my support!'

She gently opened the door. Lord Staffa being in one of his stupor fits, lay stretched on the bed, apparently lifeless, with heavy-lidded eyes, almost closed. 'A corpse!' said she, and



creeping close to the bed head, cried, 'Donald! Donald! and is it thus, my soul's dear Donald?'—running instantly senseless into the hall, and there meeting Doctor Scot, she stepped quickly up to him: placing both hands on his shoulders, and staring full in his face, with the most deplorable vacancy of sense in her countenance that could be imagined, she would have sunk on the floor if not supported. 'Call Mrs. Deborah this moment,' said she. She came; and as poor Lord Scaleby was her shadow, he followed, and heightened the distressful scene, for he knew her, and calling her 'poor pretty lady!' clung fast to her gown, screaming dreadfully.

Miss Vesey's senses were all deadened, even to apparent extinction. My Lord was forced from her, and she

carried up stairs to bed. While the servants were endeavouring to restrain my Lord's following her, Sancho, the black boy, led by Lord Scaleby's cries, appeared. Looking at him, my Lord cried, 'Devil! O'Connor! from a concatenation of ideas, thinking the one and the other must follow, and with force bursting from his keepers, fled away with velocity, till, falling down, through weakness, he was brought back; and for many days Deborah could not pacify his fears.'

Poor Miss Vesey lay in a similar state to that of Lord Staffa. See we here an instance of sympathy prevalent in congenial minds! his raving fits were over, and both now seemingly appeared senseless. The physician's hopes revived as to the latter, but were ques-

tionable relative to the former, and yet she had no bodily complaint.

On the third day arrived Sir Ralph and Lady Vesey, and their little boy: they arrived to unspeakable distress! Although apprized of each melancholy occurrence, Sir Ralph could not utter one word, but hastened to shut himself up in his library. Lady Vesey, placing herself in the first chair, shed a torrent of tears. ‘Doctor Scot,’ said she, ‘believe me, I am truly acquiescent; these things are right: we might otherwise have been too happy, and too firmly stood upon this fallible world.’

‘Madam,’ replied he, ‘such truly Christian resignation secures everlasting reward, and I verily believe will soon meet a preludary recompence

here, for the Doctors aver neither case is desperate.'

'May it be so! Good Sir, turn all your attention to poor Sir Ralph; I will go directly to see my child and dear Donald.' She found both in the same lethargic way; retired to her closet, and at dinner met Sir Ralph, much less dispirited by the Doctors' conversation, and his friend looking cheerful, and talking of nothing but hope.

After dinner Doctor Scot prevailed on Sir Ralph to open the many letters that awaited him: one was from Mr. Jephson, and a strange farrago it was of wild joy and extreme passion.

'Why, Doctor,' says Sir Ralph, 'poor Obadiah Vesey is dead, and may Heaven, in its mercy, forgive him! Pray, Sir, read that paragraph, for I cannot.'

The Doctor accordingly read thus :  
‘ Yes, yes, Obadiah sure enough is gone to the Devil, and O’Connor will follow soon after our next assize. I conjecture Lord Staffa told your Honour as how he and his servants rescued the master from the man, but not till after Vesey’s business was in part done. Hearing by chance that a dreadful murder was committed near Penrith, I e’en took my horse, and rode over to enquire about it. The landlord and I are very gracious, so he carried me to see the dying man; and a dreadful sight it was; he was so altered I did not know him: so, hearing of the jewels, I hied me to Justice Clayton’s, and he shewed them to me in a trice. By Heaven, cried I, this gold signet is the Lord Aumerl’s arms! So I ran

back directly to enquire further about it. Landlord called a Lord's man, there to tell me how these men were taken: so he did; and saying Lord Staffa was his master,—Oh, oh! says I, I will go and have a bit of converse with the old fellow about his son and Miss Vesey; and adad I rushed into his room without ceremony; but egad, I was quite thunder-struck with the appearance of a fine young Lord, who was more civil than I deserved. Poor gentleman! I found he was going to Battleridge. When I told him of your poor Miss's loss, I never saw a man in such a taking. I was forced to leave him, because I never sleep from home when Peggy's reckoning is out: as soon as she is safe in bed, Heaven willing, I shall be with your Honour. I could not get back to Penrith till

late next day; then I found Lord Staffa and all his people were gone. Landlord told me the man was dead, and that they had put him in a coffin, and laid him snug in a barn; for corpses were unlucky things in Inns. So I thought I would see him once more; and such a frightful distorted corpse never was seen. Well may one fear death and look at him! and yet, though I could not swear to him when dying, I can swear the dead man is Obadiah Vesey, in any court in England. So then I went to the jail, and enquired how the murderer behaved. "Very sulky and daring," said Gaoler; "he still says, as before the justice, they were brothers, gentlemen's sons, sent to carry some valuables into Scotland; that the deceased used him ill, for which he meant but to drub, not kill him."

“Being shewed up to the man, “So,” says I, “you have brought your pigs to a fine market! you are known; and the Honourable Squire Vesey died last night of wounds he received from you; confess you are that wicked Irish O’Connor, (for I thought it must be him) the contriver of all manner of treachery.” Methought he started; but then putting on an horrible grin, and clapping his hand on his breeches pocket, “Here is what,” said he, “will make all easy. I shall get counsel, and to them only, henceforward, will I speak.” And he has kept his resolution hitherto.

“When I got home, Peggy was sadly shocked to think such a great gentleman’s body should lie, as it were, among pigs, for they are often in and out of the barn, and advised me to



send a letter by Nic Williams, my head clerk, to tell the old Lord of Obadiah's death, and to learn where and how his son was to be buried; and so I did. It is above a week since I sent, and no Nic is returned; mayhap he is gone to his namesake. Landlord, tired of waiting, and complaining of the stench, has buried Obadiah in the church-yard.

‘ Talking to the barber of it, whilst he was shaving me, he said, “ Between you and I, Lawyer Jephson, the ostler left the barn open all night, something got in, they think two old sows, and eat, and mangled, and tore the poor gentleman so frightfully, that, afraid of his relations' anger, Landlord buried what was left directly.” It made me shudder. I did not tell Peggy; but

to be sure it was as good as he deserved.'

Shocked to a great degree, the Knight and the Doctor were long silent; at length said Sir Ralph, 'How can this callous letter be accounted for? I know Jephson has a warm and humane, nay, a tender heart.'

'All to be accounted for,' replied the Doctor, 'as most such things are; for want of cultivated education, the milkiness and softness of Christianity answer to politeness in the moral duties, of which the middling class of people, in general, know nothing. John Bull's natural ferocity remains untamed, if not chastised by gentle documents and mild example in early youth.'

Sir Ralph instantly sent an enquiry

after Mr. Jephson's clerk to Aumerl. The servant's answer was, that a young man had called with a letter last week, and followed their Lord with it to town. They knew not the contents.

The Doctor and Sir Ralph joined in pitying the poor Earl, as thinking it would prove his *coup de grace*; and in drawing the moral, pointed so clearly in the consequences of Mr. Vesey's horrid death. The only cheerful face in Battleridge was faithful Macpherson's; his Lord had twice looked at him, and grasped his hand, had once called Sancho, and having really slept, the physicians' hopes prevailed. Not so sanguine were they respecting their other patient; her state of stupor continued; she swallowed every thing put in her mouth, but seemingly lay in a coma; perfect quietness was all they

could order. The following day their injunctions were frustrated. Master Vesey, who fondly doated upon his sister, longed to see her, and could not account for being kept from her. Being very cunning, he hid himself in an adjacent gallery, when seeing one of the nurses come out of her room, leaving the door a-jar, he crept in: creeping upon the bed, and kissing her, he cried as loud as his little shrill voice would go, "Wake! wake! sissy; wake and see me, I am come to see you?"

This was such a contrast to the absolute silence Miss Vesey had been kept in, that she started and screamed violently. Away run the frightened boy, and hid himself. The nurses and Doctor soon assembled. "This is the crisis," said the latter, "waiting the event is all that can be done." A most

violent hysteric laugh and crying succeeded for two hours : when quite exhausted, she turned seemingly into a most uneasy posture, and slept soundly for three hours.

The Doctor's hopes were built upon the great relief tears would probably have afforded her, declaring that all depended upon the manner in which she first awoke.

'To that event,' said Lady Vesey, 'a mother's tenderness is alone proper to attend; yes, I will witness my child's resurrection, as it were, from the grave, or her beatification.'

There was no dissuading her from it. Four long hours were the vigils appointed to this anxious attendant. Miss Vesey then stirred, opened her eyes, and sighed deeply; when looking at my Lady, she cried, "Mamma, I

am so thirsty!’ Lady Vesey seeing her daughter drowsy, had time only to give the sought-for viand before she was again asleep. In this way she continued twelve hours. Lady Vesey being forced by her anxious friends to bed, left her woman, an old and favourite servant, to supply her place. Upon Miss Vesey’s next waking, she asked for something to eat; and eat heartily. ‘Mrs Hammond,’ says she, ‘I am so comfortable! but I have had horrid dreams about being at Aumerl, and about something worse.’ She slept again; and upon waking, reverted to the subject of her dreams, beginning to question their being such.

Mrs. Hammond had received her orders from the higher powers, and upon Miss Vesey again resuming the questionable subject, replied, ‘My

dearest young lady, you have been ill, and very light-headed: in such cases strange dreams haunt the sufferers; it is bad to dwell upon them.'

'Yes,' replied Miss Vesey, 'I may have been ill; you are like Mamma, when I was a child she never would let me talk of my dreams lest I should tell stories.' And again she fell asleep.

How happy did this gleam of returning reason make all the family at Battleridge! Lord Staffa, too, daily mended. Extremity of weakness was now his malady. From the first going off of his stupor he was perfectly recollected, and expressed very soon his wretchedness upon Miss Vesey's loss. The Physician, for he saw no one else, assured him she was found, had been luckily safe at a relation's house, and was now removed, and with still nearer

relations. 'I want faith,' said he; 'I cannot believe till I see her hand-writing. I wish Sir Ralph and my Lady would return.' And when he was told he should see them the next day, he seemed greatly delighted.

After another very good night, Mrs. Hammond thought she heard Miss Vesey move, and opening the curtain, found her sitting up in bed, and weeping. 'Dear Mrs. Hammond, do tell me if Doctor Scot is here?' 'Yes, Madam, assuredly.' 'Then, then, my reason and my wretchedness are both returned! It is plain mine were not dreams; it was not an ideal Doctor Scot I saw. If you love me call him directly; he is a good man, and incapable of deceiving. If I should again be deranged he will bear it better than my dearest parents. I saw my dear



mother once by my bed side. Give to both my kindest duty, and tell them, should I again be ill, I suffer not at those times, I suffer only when reasonable. I must see the Doctor first, and alone.'

It being judged proper that Doctor Sims, an old and friendly physician, should be by at this requested interview, lest any sudden seizure should ensue, Miss Vesey consented. 'He has known me, poor fallible creature as I am, from childhood,' said she.

When the two Doctors entered her room, each perceived how greatly she sought calmness and fortitude, endeavouring to keep up an exact equilibrium in the article of civility to each; for she called Doctor Scot her family's preserver, Doctor Sims the supposed restorer of her reason. 'For, indeed,

gentlemen,' said she, 'I am reasonable, and my intellects are clear; therefore I beseech you not, through tenderness, to deceive me—Does not, or did not, Mr. Donald Murray lie dead in this house?'

'Neither,' replied Doctor Sims, 'upon my honour.'

'Then still I am deranged; for assuredly, Doctor Scot, when I met you last in the hall, I was just come out of the painted chamber, where I thought I saw the corpse of that good young man. Well, all is for the best; he may then live, live to grace human nature; and if I return, as I feel I shall, to insensibility, my sufferings will be light—but ah! my dearest parents, what woes will you experience in beholding your insane child!'

Doctor Scot's sincerity of heart and

tenderness of nature could not endure, unmoved, this trying scene. 'My excellent young lady,' said he, 'know assuredly that Doctor Sims advanced no falsehood; the young gentleman you enquire after lives, and is likely so to do. The Doctor equivocated somewhat, lest you should be hurried. It was not Mr. Murray you saw, for by his father and brother's death he is now become Earl of Staffa; but you saw in that Earl your old and present most faithful lover. He came here almost immediately on his return from abroad. The surprize of your seizure affected him greatly; for many days he laboured under a phrensical fever, followed by frightful fits of stupor; and it was in one of those fits you unfortunately entered his chamber. They

have ceased many days, and he is out of danger; weak he certainly is, but so perfectly collected that Nora is his incessant subject.'

Tears relieved the attentive listener; she could not speak, but bowing her head to the gentlemen, waved her hand for their departure, desiring not to be spoken to or disturbed.

Within a short time Miss Vesey requested to see her mother: it was a tearful meeting; mutual endearments passed, and doubtless many pious thoughts, full of gratitude, were wafted upwards. She wished to see Sir Ralph and the little boy. Sir Ralph had been so agitated that he was advised to postpone his visit; and Master Vesey, thinking he had been guilty of a grievous transgression in awakening his

sister, could not be prevailed upon to go.

‘It is as well as it is just at present,’ said Lady Vesey, ‘for I have much to say to you, my child—yes, your dear Donald is recovering rapidly, and talks of nothing but Nora’s return, for we have been forced to tell him you are at a relation’s house; but he will remain an infidel till assured of it under your own hand: so, my dear, as soon as that poor little thin hand can hold a pen it must be employed to that purpose.’

Casting a look of ineffable woe on Lady Vesey, the poor sufferer asked hastily, if my Lord knew of her long imprisonment at Aumerl? My Lady foreseeing the consequences, was rather nonplussed; but to tell an untruth was

to her impossible. 'I question not his knowing of it.'

'Then, dearest madam, flatter me not, had he known *before* his Honour, and I believe his affection brought him here, what a tarnished character I must ever have! Question you if the man, whom I well know thinks the female character as easily blown off as the bloom of the plum, could ever admit a thought of a girl so roughly seized, so long the property of a depraved man; her professed and incensed lover, and confined in a family so totally void of principle? No! never can he think of me, but perhaps as an object of pity. I have no witnesses of my providential innocence but the dependants of my incensed uncle; nor in truth should I wish to enter the noble house of

Murray with a stigma which must ever sully my family, who, though less noble, yet hitherto have possessed integrity and reputation equal to that of Lord Staffa's. Miserable is that woman who, wishing to form an alliance founded on the truest and purest affection, yet cannot flatter herself she possesses her husband's unquestionable approbation and unlimited confidence!

'My dear and noble girl,' said Lady Vesey, 'what can I reply to opinions so perfectly in unison with my own? I have not a single doubt but all will be well, and that Sir Ralph Vesey's exemplary child will be sought after by Lord Staffa as the principal delight and ornament of his house, and on no other terms shall she enter it. My Nora, like Milton's Eve, shall not unsought be won.'

Being wonderfully mended, that evening the physicians very readily replied to Lord Staffa's earnest enquiries after Miss Vesey's seizure. He was variously and too much affected by the detail. Love, pity, rage, and the fear of her having been insulted, evidently shook his weakened frame, although he said little, save menacing Obadiah with revenge, as soon as his feeble hand could wield a sword. He was told of Obadiah's death, but not the manner of it, or the wretched finale put to his earthly part.

Passing a dreadful restless night, his Lordship, at the earnest entreaties of his old confidential servant, Macpherson, repeated to him what Doctor Sims had related, closing all by saying, 'And thus, Macpherson, is every hope of my life blasted! Ah, that I



never had recovered my senses! It is impossible she can have remained virtuous, even delicate as she is, in such a diabolical family! Yet her mind, I will venture to say, is uncontaminated. Why, then, not marry her, and live abroad? In Scotland, perhaps, it might not at first be eligible to settle.'

'And why, I pray ye, my Lord,' replied Macpherson, 'mayn't Miss become the pride of Scotland? Egad, she would grace the throne there, if these vile English had not taken it away. Mrs. Deborah has told me all about her. Why, man, she is as pure, as white as the finest bleached piece of Holland made on your Lordship's lands.'

Lord Staffa smiled, smiled after a long discontinuance of smiles. Mrs. Deborah's official dignity at Aumerland general good character being reported

by Macpherson, her attendence early that morning was requested by Lord Staffa. Mrs. Deborah was very minute, diffuse, and circumstantial in her account of Miss Vesey's imprisonment at Aumerl; lavishing deserved praises on her and on Doctor Scot. My Lord having been introduced to him by Sir Ralph, in the course of the morning, sought a conference with him.

Doctor Scot corroborated every article advanced by Deborah in his simply sublime convincing manner: he had just finished his narrative, when a trampling of horses were heard in the court-yard. 'Here, my Lord,' said the Doctor, 'comes the very man who can confirm all I say relative to Miss Vesey's amazing fortitude: pray, Mr. Macpherson, step down and present my respects to Sir Thomas Hazzlerig,

for it is that good man who is just arrived, requesting he would come directly here to me, for certain reasons, before he sees the family; for, my Lord, I would not keep your Lordship one moment in unnecessary suspence.'

This was the Doctor's ostensible reason; but knowing the jealous tenacity of real love, he wished to procure Sir Thomas's evidence before he had seen himself or any of the young lady's friends; and Sir Thomas's relation was so full, so conclusive, so convincing, that Lord Staffa, catching his and the Doctor's hand, called them charitable men, relievers of a distressed and doubtful heart. 'Yet, gentlemen,' said he, 'without your attestation, however comfortable, one word of a similar assurance from my beloved

Miss Vesey's mouth would have been sufficient—such is my dependence on her veracity.'

Sir Thomas asked leave to pass on to Sir Ralph on particular business, requesting re-admittance in the evening to Lord Staffa. His business was to acquaint Sir Ralph of Lord Aumerl's death. 'Happy, assuredly,' said he, 'as to this world; for he had nothing but disgrace in view. Jephson's letter relating Obadiah's death was abrupt, and followed before he had recovered the great fatigue of his journey: he was at that very time trembling with fear, through expectation of my uncle Ireton's visit, from whom he was to learn the opinion of the Protector relating to himself and his son. Upon reading the letter, or rather some part of it, he fell senseless on the ground,

and never spoke more; a paralytic stroke ensued, and in three days a second stroke carried him off. I fear he was ill attended; for Prudence hearing of O'Connor's imprisonment, not without signs of insanity, made off, and cannot be heard of. My Lord's remains are upon the road to Aumerl. I find those of Obadiah cannot be removed, having been interred some days at Penrith, without being wrapt in lead. I come, therefore, my friend, to take off or assist you in any business that may be requisite to be forwarded at Aumerl. You must act for your poor kinsman till confirmed his trustee by law.'

Deborah, gossiping with Sir Thomas's servant, learnt his errand, and through natural yet silly zeal for Lord

Scaleby, told him of it. Master Vesey and his attendant were then with him, for he doated extravagantly on the boy. My Lord did not rightly comprehend her at first, though his faculties were wonderfully cleared, but at length he cried, 'Oh sad! oh sad! they will fetch me back!' (by *they* he meant Obadiah and O'Connor) when falling on his knees, he fell a praying. 'Don't cry, cousin,' said the boy, 'papa shall shoot them.'

'You a great Lord, Lord Aumerl, and to cry like a baby!' 'Out upon you,' says Deborah! 'No, no Aumerl,' said the poor Lord; '*this*, (laying his hand on the boy's head) this is Lord Aumerl; he will prove good Lord Aumerl, good to Scaleby.'

Deborah then told him his brother was dead.

‘Where is O’Connor?’ said he, fearfully.

‘Soon going to be hanged,’ said she.

‘Poor brother! poor O’Connor!’ was all he said; but he seemed agitated all the day, and would not take any nourishment.

Every thing that had passed relative to Lord Staffa’s opinion of Miss Vesey was joyfully retailed to her by her mother. Her looks rather than her expressions denoted joy. ‘It cannot, cannot be,’ said she; ‘however, I will endeavour at getting well as soon as possible, that poor Lord Staffa may be restored to peace, in being assured that I harbour not a flattering thought as to him; for if he demeans himself in soliciting such a poor disgraced crea-

ture as I am, depend upon it, madam, I shall refuse him.'

Lady Vesey smiled at her daughter's determination. Sir Thomas being duly informed how things stood between the lovers, called all the delicacy and guarded conduct of the negotiators silly parade and sentimental nonsense. Hearing Lord Staffa was allowed to sit in his anti-chamber, Sir Thomas took the opportunity of slipping in unseen. 'Give you joy, my Lord,' said he, 'of this flight! If I were your Lordship, I would fly a few steps higher, and there you will see the sweetest and worthiest of girls, Miss Vesey, recovering from a dying state—dying, as thinking you dead. They have all deceived you. Come, come, my Lord, and perform a miraculous



cure. I know she is alone—are you able to walk so far?’

‘By the help of your arm, I may. Dearest of creatures! let us either live or die together.’

Weak as Lord Staffa was, he reached Miss Vesey’s chamber. She was leaning her head upon her hand, on a table.

‘Here, madam,’ said Sir Thomas, ‘I bring you an ungovernable and impetuous lover.’

‘She started, fell back in her chair, and burst into tears. My Lord was too weak to catch her in his arms; but taking her hand, accepted a timely offered seat to support his trembling frame. All were silent. At length the names of *Nora* and *Donald* being exchanged, Sir Thomas, ringing for attendance to be within call, in case

of any noise, thought it most eligible and kind to leave his lovers unwatched. Going down calmly to the gentlemen, he noticed not his late manoeuvre; but in a short time sending for Lady Vesey, advised her to see after her daughter, she having secreted a young man, alone, in her chamber.

Astonishment prevailed, till Sir Thomas confessed and gloried in his contrivance; reproofs were his reward; and even Doctor Scot stiled the enterprise daring and questionable; wishing the event might justify the proceeding.

‘But pray,’ said Sir Ralph, ‘how did these poor debilitated creatures look? What did they say?’

‘Why, one would think you (replied Sir Thomas) a prying girl, who longs to hear a little of the Freemasonry of

love; and who, hurrying over the prelude of romance, dwells only on lovers' speeches, and the concluding nuptials: those speeches, my friend, though to the parties most interesting, are, when retailed, the dullest things in nature. Descriptions of love tete-a-tetes are like descriptions of beautiful landscapes; you may write and talk for ever of woods, lakes, valleys; but yet all is flat and dull. No one likes better than I do to bring disconsolate lovers together; but then, for their own sake, and mine, down drops the curtain.'

Lady Vesey hurrying into her daughter's chamber with trepidation, found her and Lord Staffa in earnest, though scarce audible discourse. 'My dear Lady Vesey,' said my Lord, tak-

ing one hand of each, 'how can I express my gratitude here (kissing Lady Vesey's hand)—or here, (saluting Miss Vesey's hand) how can I delineate my heart's suggested approbation—admiration of this dear sufferer, or describe the love immensurate I have, and ever shall feel for her !'

'You are very good, my Lord,' said Lady Vesey; 'but loving you next to this and our other child, allow me to wish this dangerous yet highly satisfactory conference may end: remember your weak state, and let me beg of you to return to your chamber.'

'Pray do,' said Nora, 'What is so precious to me as your health?'

'To morrow, Lady Vesey,' said my Lord, 'we may meet again: on that condition I go.' 'Certainly.'

Fervent *banjours* passed between

the lovers; and by the arm of Lady Vesey, and the assistance of Mr. Macpherson, my Lord reached his apartment. Lady Vesey returned to her daughter. 'My love,' said she, 'was not I a true prophetess? You have, perchance, put your threats of refusal in force.'

'No, mamma,' said Miss Vesey, (hiding her face in her mother's bosom) no, I had not the heart to do it.'

'Very well,' said Lady Vesey, 'now get you to bed, and let me not hear a chattering word till to-morrow.'

What a cheerful evening was passed in the parlour, in consequence of Lady Vesey's account of the invalids! The particulars given by Sir Thomas of the miserable way in which the Lord Protector remained, evidently affected

Doctör Scot. Sir Thomas observing it, said, ‘ My good man, your Party will soon rise as our scale shall sink : our great eye is closing; our polyphemian party (like the Cyclops when his visual ray was closed) will beat itself in pieces from its great strength, deprived of proper guidance. Ambition, avarice, doubt, and cowardice will step forth, and by destroying his Highness’s excellently poised government, cavalier tenets will prevail, Romish priests in disguise, loose women, and buffoons of every species, will govern your idle, sauntering, soft-natured, yet sensible Sovereign.’

Enough of the narrative and dialogue necessary to the elucidating characters. Nought remains but a simply concise concludatory chain of

facts, for nothing is so tiresome (Penelope's web excepted) as spinning novels by measure. It may be imagined, from being together every day, 'and all the day,' Lord Staffa's and Miss Vesey's health, grounded on peace of mind, soon regained stability.

He spoke tenderly of his father, but it might be collected that himself had been assured of Nora's being married; that he had been sent from one part of our Northern America to another; and deprived of all intercourse with England, till summoned thither by the old Lord's illness; and that the first dim intelligence he had gained of Miss Vesey's single state was retailed from some accidental visitor at his old castle of Cross-bow in Scotland,

which accelerated his journey to Battleridge.

Doctor Scot was more easily prevailed upon to bring his lady and family to Battleridge, from the necessary business he was engaged in, in being named conjunctive trustee with Sir Ralph Vesey, in the personal and pecuniary care of Lord Aumerl.

This poor Lord would not leave his present friends, under whose lenient care his faculties daily gained strength, yet never quite attained their pristine tone; he read and was amused, and, quite *en famille*, often conversed sensibly: humanity, charity, and tenderness of heart, with unbounded affection to his friends, distinguished his innocent life. The quondam honest Bailiff, Mr.



Smith, and Mrs. Deborah, being happily united, and liberally rewarded for their fidelity, Mrs. Smith was made house-keeper at Battleridge, and her husband principal servant to Lord Aumerl, constantly attending upon his person, and accompanying him on horseback, or airing in a magnificent equipage kept for him, which constituted great part of his happiness; but never did my Lord get into his carriage without saying, ‘Don’t drive you know where,’ meaning towards Aumerl; nor would he endure to be called by that name, always pointing to Master Vesey, and lifting his eyes upwards, (supposed to be that he might prove a better man than the late Earl) if any one gave him his proper title.’

When the summer assize drew near, Lord Staffa unwillingly, yet neces-

sarily, left his Nora, to appear as witness on the trial of the murderous O'Connor; and Doctor Scot's humanity led him to attend my Lord, hoping to bring that vile man to a proper sense of his desperate state.

He was found guilty, after a short trial; and received his sentence with dreadful insensibility. Doctor Scot ineffectually endeavoured to work upon his hardened mind. O'Connor declared himself a good Catholic, and that if Father Kerry, the priest of the village he came from in Ireland, was there, they should settle all those matters cleverly. Lord Staffa's humanity sent for this priest. He was the lowest and worst of men. O'Connor confessed to, and was most comfortably absolved by this spiritual friend, after which they were seldom separated, and

seldom sober. Attended by him, in a state of inebriety, he ascended the ladder, and with huzzas, rather than prayers, entered eternity.

My Lord and Doctor Scot were informed, when at Penrith, that a mad woman had followed this wretched man, and being cruelly treated by him, was now confined in a parish house, her settlement not being known. It was the poor ill-fated Prudence. She was removed shortly afterwards, by Miss Vesey's order, to a cottage near Aumerl, and there most kindly and leniently attended; a few years closed her fantastic, yet not, in the latter part of her days, unhappy life.

It was not till the middle of August following, from the law's delay, that the happy and splendid nuptials of Lord Staffa and Miss Vesey were cele-

brated with as much eclat at Battle-ridge, as that demure and formal time allowed. We have no white lutstring; pearl pins, flowing dressed weddings, the finale of most novel unions, here to boast. Queen Elizabeth's deep ruffs weresomewhat cropped; Queen Mary's close Spanish jealous dresss till exhibited its sable hue; while the old English nunnish coif and little high-crowned hat most generally prevailed; though the court ladies, in the latter days of the late King's reign, had, under the auspices of Vandyke, let their ringlets flow over the no longer hidden beauties of the neck.

The decent convivialities and hospitalities of Battleridge on the late happy event were, by Doctor Scot's particular desire and prudent advice, impeded early in September, upon the

death of the Protector, at Whitehall; and wonderfully was the good Doctor's tender, deep, researching mind affected by that circumstance. The medly of events and variety of governments that ensued during the following year and a half, when the Restoration happily took place, are too recent and well known to require a novelist's pen; and, indeed, the majesty of history would be disgraced by the flow of fiction.

Sir Ralph Vesey was with difficulty withheld from joining the Sovereign's friends, in their early endeavour to reinstate the King, fruitlessly formed by them very soon after Richard Cromwell's abdication. Richard Cromwell was too much a cavalier himself, and indeed such were most of Oliver's children, not readily to relinquish his father's ill gotten greatness.

Doct<sup>r</sup> Scot's advice to his friends was, to give offence to no men; to lie dormant till the stream of violent torrents cleared itself, and patiently to wait the peaceful times which would necessarily arise from present confusion and turbulency. And hence it was, that Sir Ralph Vesey, at length, complied with Lord Staffa's earnest desire of a general removal to his castle of Cross-bow, near Kirkcudbright, in Scotland.

Lord Aumerl's and Doct<sup>r</sup> Scot's whole family very gratefully joined that from Battleridge; and for upwards of a twelvemonth, during times of distraction, all was peace and happiness at Cross-bow—happiness augmented by the addition of a son to Lord Staffa, and another little daugh-

ter to Doctor Scot, who being christened *Scotia*, was known in after times as the beautiful Scotty Scot, and became, by marrying Master Vesey, Countess of Aumerl.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

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| 97  | The Old Batchelor                    | 122 | The Plain Dealer      |
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| 108 | The Relapse                          | 133 | Elfrida               |
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